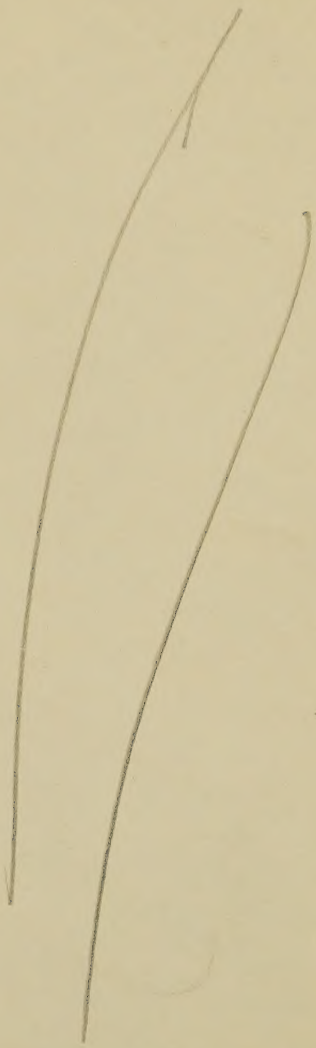

ELLALINE TERRISS

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From the painting by W. Lee-Hankey, A.R.W.S., R.O.I.

AS BLUEBELL IN "BLUEBELL IN FAIRYLAND"

ELLALINE TERRISS

By HERSELF
AND WITH OTHERS

With Eight Half-tone Plates

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney

First Published in 1928

Printed in Great Britain

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

to my darling Betty
who has given me
so much happiness
and

TO YOU

FOREWORD

BY

DAME MADGE KENDAL

ELLALINE,

I find since your earliest girlhood you have invariably met everybody in their "Sunday best." No one has ever in dull serge or corduroys been seen by you.

Perfect Pink and Beautiful Blues are the only colours worn by your Comrades and Friends.

Once have your eyes and Heart been saddened by the Khaki worn by our brave soldiers.

Affection, Truth, Loyalty, have been the Sun, Moon and Stars that have guided and protected you.

Seymour Hicks has always liked his Bread well buttered on one side and lavishly covered with Honey on the other; and when he married you —I need say no more.

To you—all men raise their Hats—and would gladly place them at your feet—those who wear *two* or *more*, feel the same enthusiasm!

I can only place my early Victorian Bonnet and rejoice that you are a Victorian—in every sense—both off and on the Stage—One of the Best.

In all affection
Yours true Friend
Madge Kendal

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ELLALINE TERRISS

CHAPTER I

WHEN NOTHING MATTERED

FIRST let me say at once that this is not altogether a story of my own little life. This being so I may perhaps ask you to read it without fearing you will be bored.

It is just a clothes-line on which I have pegged out anecdotes and memories of many of the wonderful people it has been my lot to fall in with on a jolly tramp of forty years through stage-land; to me a land of Hope—and perhaps a little undeserved Glory.

I have been continually asked to write my life, but for many good reasons have always refused to do so.

Firstly, I don't think anyone should do so brave a thing unless they are either brilliantly witty, or that what they have to say is something of national importance. I have noticed, too, that not only are the bookstalls' battlefields strewn with "Lives," but that the booksellers have a

strange habit of marking them down from a guinea to a shilling in less time than it has taken their authors to perpetrate them. This seems to me prophetic.

These are only three of my reasons, but they are reasons enough for my not having been persuaded to join the shilling sales. Lately, however, having, thank goodness, quite a lot of leisure time on my hands I fell to thinking of the really amusing and delightful people I have been privileged to know during my life, and I said to myself, I hope not unwisely: "If I have been so interested in the dwarfs and giants of my time, all of whom possessed either vastly amusing or extraordinarily striking personalities, why should written memories of pre-war celebrities not interest those who remember them, and, at the same time, those also who are unlucky enough never to have known these people?"

So I determined to wile away a few hours each day in the pleasant occupation of thinking backwards, and committing my thoughts to paper.

I have mentioned the word "clothes-line." Well, that line is myself, but I hope not too much of myself. To use another metaphor: it is simply the silken thread which holds a wad of dollar bills together, for, as a romantic story would mean nothing if there were no hero or heroine to keep up its love interest, so would my memories become nothing but a collection of magazine paragraphs unless I gently reminded the reader that such a person as Ellaline Terriss existed and exists—if as nothing else, as, at any rate, the

spare tyre of the Ford on which I am inviting him to take a short journey with me. And that's yet another metaphor! Isn't it?

The first thing one does with any sort of a new car is to put a number-plate on it, and I have therefore hooked mine on at the back, its numbers being London 0057. This is because I live in London and am, indeed, fifty-seven. Looking at myself in the glass I can hardly believe it. But I don't mind a bit, and so to me the fact is a happy one and, being so, it must stand.

Some years ago I christened myself "The Veteran Ingénue." Did I do this, I wonder, because I was afraid someone else would do it for me? No! I don't think so. It was because I was nearly fifty and still playing young parts.

I am credibly informed by all and sundry that in a room whose lights are tempered with mercy I don't look a day over thirty. I have never made it my business to contradict this because, between ourselves, I don't look at all bad.

When, however, in the years to come, the crows homing at eventide think fit to rest awhile and leave the imprint of their feet about my eyes, I think perhaps I may endeavour to keep in my friends' good books by interviewing the modern lip-stick and its near relations, the powder-box and hare's-foot, but I am not quite sure.

I am somewhat of a Victorian, and my intention at the moment is to reserve this insult to my complexion for another fifty years. If, however, at that time I feel it would be a wise thing to procure an alibi from the top drawer of my dressing-table,

it may be that I shall do so, though I should hate to feel that my heirs, executors and assigns were condemned each morning out of politeness to kiss a face which would be like nothing so much as the window of the celebrated Mr. Clarkson's shop.

Of my birth I remember little. This is hardly to be wondered at, but it took place, my mother told me, in the Falkland Islands, where my father, then little more than a boy, had gone to farm sheep.

A sailor, I remember, told me of these Islands that one eats so much mutton there that one grows wool. I am not sure I believed him.

This lonely little spot is celebrated for three things: a great naval battle, a large quantity of penguins, and as being the birthplace of Ellaline Lewin, which is my real name.

Mind you, while I am all for the praise and glory of Admiral Sturdee's splendid victory, the fact that the inhabitants have placed over the tiny wooden door of the little Ship Hotel which heard my first cry, a tablet which reads: "In this house the great actress Ellaline Terriss was born," makes me extremely doubtful that the Falklands have anything but two things and not three things to be proud of. Someone, I think, in these far distant parts must be much more charming than strictly accurate. It is true I was born there—everyone has to be born somewhere, but I was never a great actress, and I have never pretended to be one. Great actresses play Lady Macbeth and Camille, and, I believe, cause audiences to swoon away. Whatever else I may have done I am perfectly certain that the word "swoon" was never in my vocabulary. I

cannot say, however, that I have not heard hundreds of people shout for encores from me, because I cannot deny I have had the good fortune to appear in many pieces written round me, which have run for so long as two years, but these little things are no reason why my kind friends over the oceans should bracket my name with a British Admiral, for everyone knows, I hope, that I am a respectable actor's wife (this can be read both ways); or even of placing me on so high a level as the beautiful web-footed little fish-eaters, which Dan Leno described as "looking like waiters in bad dress suits."

However, we will leave my birthplace (not, as I did, in a sailing ship), and get as quickly as literary decency and split infinitives will permit, to the time when I became a working woman, and began to meet many people so much more interesting than myself. My father had originally been in the Merchant Service, and, in fact, during his life-time had done all sorts of things before he ultimately settled down to become the great actor which in his own line he undoubtedly was.

He had mined for silver in Colorado, and had had a station in Australia, but I think his Falkland Island speculation with sheep was his last adventure in open territories under blue skies.

I have heard much of the mutiny that broke out on the sailing ship on which my mother, who was a darling among darlings, sailed with her tiny mite for Plymouth, and of how my father, with only part of the crew, brought us safely to port. He was, as I think everyone who knew him thought,

one of the most perfectly and delightfully irresponsible beings who ever lived, and certainly one of the handsomest men I have ever seen.

I do not mean disrespectfully to call him irresponsible. I pay him the word as a banker's draft for an enormous amount, for it was this very characteristic, combined with his charm, that made him one of the best loved and most popular men the stage has ever known. He adored me and I adored him.

However, this is purely a personal matter, and no one, I expect, will want to know about it any more than they want to hear that my great-aunt Groate, the wife of the historian, was an honoured and intimate friend of Queen Victoria, or that my family tree, if shaken, would drop an apple or two with a Peer's name written on their cores. These things have never interested me at any time, so why should they interest others ?

Sisters I had none ; brothers two. Of the majority of my father's relations I saw little. My father, I think, rather horrified the soldiers and distinguished civil servants, who were his near kith and kin, by having become an actor.

I may say the fact that they were annoyed only amused him, and he was never more happy then when he did deliberately outrageous things in their presence or chaffed them unmercifully on their attitude towards his art.

Personally, even as a child, I can remember being much upset by their attitude, but I suppose they are to be forgiven, for 1870 was not 1928 in stageland, and I have since discovered that humour is

only permitted to the very few, and is certainly seldom vouchsafed either to distinguished warriors or extinguished Government officials.

I had little education; that is to say, I was not finished off in Paris as so many girls are now. I am speaking of education in the society sense of the word, for I learned all I needed at a private school and spent a great deal of my girlhood on a dear old farm at Newbury.

There my principal studies consisted of being taught to make bread, and butter, and learn to skim thick yellow cream from great basins of milk in brown bowls which stood in the cool dairy. I learnt where the hens were most likely to have "laid away" when they got tired of their proper nests, and, most wonderful of all, I found my first sweetheart.

I think I was about eleven. He was about a year older. He gave me as a pledge of undying affection (affection is undying at twelve years old) a little silver ring with "Mizpah" engraved upon it. Even then I felt that "Mizpah" was a most comprehensive word and wondered how six letters could have so much meaning compressed into them. I cannot remember how he disappeared out of my life, or if I disappeared out of his, but lovers have a habit of vanishing at all ages in all ages, so I'm told.

When I was about twelve I went to live with my parents at Bedford Park, then a beautiful village outskirt of the metropolis, where artists, painters, and authors had made their homes, our neighbours being, amongst others, the then Mr.

Arthur Pinero and the late Mr. Claude Carton. Mr. Pinero was an actor at the Lyceum in those days and had only some short time before commenced his marvellous career as a writer which was to place him on a pinnacle for all time. This was in 1885, and my father was the people's idol at the Adelphi Theatre.

I remember when King George was married the streets were filled with stands which early in the day were crowded with people watching the procession.

In the evening my father took me out to see the illuminations, and the workmen were busy taking down the seats. Suddenly one of them caught sight of us, stared, grinned and recognizing my father, shouted to his fellow workmen, "Hats off, boys! Put the stands up again—here comes Bill Terriss."

The *Harbour Lights* was then running into the end of its second year, and as David Kingsley, the young Naval Lieutenant in that play, his photographs were in every shop window from Bond Street to Bow. He had only one other photographic rival at this time, the very beautiful Miss Mary Anderson. I suppose that never has a more exquisite pair of lovers been seen than when they appeared together as Romeo and Juliet at the old Lyceum Theatre.

My life at the age of thirteen was quite uneventful. My mother and I were simple in our tastes and seldom left our pretty house in Bedford Park with its charming surroundings, except to go to London to see the plays then being performed; this was our chief amusement. How proud we

used to be when we trundled off to town in a one-horse, hired landau, driven by a coachman whose top hat was more often than not rubbed the wrong way, and who always had a rug round his legs even in the summer-time so that no one should suspect that he had a pair of corduroy trousers underneath his livery overcoat. A landau in those days was very grand!

Of all the theatres we used to visit I think perhaps, with, of course, the exception of the Adelphi, I loved going to the old Gaiety Theatre most of all.

Little did I dream as I sat and watched the inimitable Fred Leslie and "Our Nellie," as the gallery had christened their genius, Nellie Farren, that I was later to become leading lady at the house these two great people had made their own.

What a man Fred Leslie was! There was nothing he couldn't do. He was not brought up as a dancer, but he was the most delightful dancer imaginable. He had not been trained as a singer, yet he was a delight to listen to. His dark, handsome face and his grace and charm made him stand head and shoulders above his fellows, and the moment he stepped on the stage he radiated sunshine. His versatility was remarkable. For instance, when Mrs. Shaw, the American Society whistler, came to London and took it by storm, Leslie, who had never whistled before, was in one month whistling just as well as she did.

I cried bitterly when I heard of his death, which took place at the early age of thirty-six; indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the news of this tragedy cast a gloom over the metropolis for many

days, and people talked of little else. You see, there were no gramophones or wireless sets in the 'eighties.

I am so glad to think that I saw the marvellous Nellie Farren. She was nearing the end of her career at this time, but I had the great good fortune to sit in admiration at her feet watching her many times in *Ruy Blas*, or *The Blasé Roué*, *Monte Cristo* and *The Area Belle*. In those days she was by no means young, but nevertheless, on the stage she was the spirit of youth personified. In the twinkling of an eye she could turn from comedy to pathos and be amusing again the next moment. Individually, these two great artistes were each brilliant, and together how wonderful!

Poor Fred Leslie killed himself by working just as hard off the stage as he did on it. He was the life and soul of every party he went to, being amusing and witty to a degree. One famous remark of his was made to that grand old actor Mr. Henry Howe. "And are you really eighty, Mr. Howe?" said Leslie. "I am," said Mr. Howe. "And how many years have you been on the stage?" inquired the Gaiety favourite. "Over sixty," said the old gentleman. "Good heavens," said Leslie, "everything you have said to you must sound like a 'cue.'"

Once while on tour staying in very bad lodgings (and when theatrical lodgings are bad there is nothing on earth to equal them), he decided after a most uncomfortable night's rest to go elsewhere at once. He paid his bill, told the landlady what he thought of her rooms and was about to leave when the

good woman flung a parting shot at him : " Good heavens ! you are particular," she said. " I've never had any complaints before. Why, there isn't a single flea in the house." " No, you're quite right," replied Leslie. " They are all married with large families."

But I must not say that my life at this time was quite uneventful, for it was in these days that I first had the infinite delight of being petted by Ellen Terry, who called me her adopted daughter, and who to me was, and always will be, " Auntie Nell," and of also being constantly in the company of Henry Irving.

Ellen Terry ! what a personality—a fairy treading on air. Always in the highest of spirits, always ready to sympathize, to give, to be helpful to everyone she met from the highest to the lowest. She was Gaiety, Youth and Optimism *in excelsis.* She was the mother of Peter Pan, for she was Peter Pan herself at the age of ten, and still was Peter Pan at the age of eighty.

And her mighty partner, Henry Irving, what a gracious gentleman he was, with the face of a prelate, the smile of a beautiful woman, and a pair of piercing, short-sighted eyes which with the aid of a pair of pince-nez could look into the very soul of you. How I wish, when as a little girl at the old Grange house at Hammersmith I played at his knee, I had been old enough to realize how great this prince of my profession really was. I am not sure though that I was ever quite comfortable even as a baby when Henry Irving was the centre of our play-time, my companions being Miss Terry's

children, Teddy (the now celebrated Gordon Craig) and his sister Édie. He was so different from any human being I have ever seen or, indeed, shall ever see. I think even as a child I must have subconsciously been aware that behind his smile the great tragedian had a "something" which made no obstacle too big for him to trample underfoot; but I was only a little girl and accepted the sweet ways he had with children as a matter of course, never dreaming that his leisure hours at the Grange were those in which his mind was far away, thinking of all the things he ultimately achieved.

I remember well he would take my hand as if he feared he might break it, and sitting quietly, would gaze intently upon we little people about him. Sometimes I used to wonder what he was thinking about—the silence used to last so long.

Everything Henry Irving did was done quietly, and deliberately, and with certainty. He was the last man in the world to be bustled by anything.

Sometimes he would take me into his garden where there was a swing and ask me if I liked swinging. I did like it very much. I loved to see the ground flying away beneath my feet and feel the air rush past me. I liked to shout: "Higher! Higher! Faster! Faster!" I told my host so, and very carefully he lifted me on to the swing, and I gripped the ropes and prepared to enjoy that delicious sensation which was half excitement and half fear.

With immense concentration he began to push the swing, which was propelled forward very

slowly about a yard. I waited hoping that suddenly he would push me higher and faster, and would really make my play-time exciting. But he didn't. I was gently rocked backwards and forwards, so gently that I almost fell asleep. Then he stopped the swing, and lifted me down, smiled and said: "You enjoyed that, eh?" "Yes," I said untruthfully. With a sigh of relief, for I am sure he had been as bored as I had, he took my hand and I trotted back to the house with him in silence.

I once appeared before him at a kind of special performance. That is what I like to say now, but as a matter of fact I was considered too small to act, and was only allowed to hold the prompt book. It was a play written and acted by the then little Violet Vanbrugh and Miss Terry's children.

It was performed at the Grange, before Sir Henry Irving and Auntie Nell. I don't remember much about it except that Gordon Craig played a girl's part, and I don't even remember that I had to prompt anyone, but I took a "call" with the rest of the cast at the fall of the curtain.

I can hear Ellen Terry still . . . full of praise, laughing and applauding, assuring us what clever children we all were, and prophesying great futures for all of us. It was delightful; one felt inches taller and almost burst with satisfaction. Mr. Irving said nothing, he only watched us under those heavy eyebrows, slightly sardonic and yet quite friendly. Ellen Terry turned to him, and in response to her obvious hope that he would join in her pæan of praise he spoke at last. "You are

stressing the pronouns too much," he said slowly. "It's a bad fault ; don't do it."

I doubt if we had any very clear idea which words *were* pronouns, and I am quite certain the actors did not know they had stressed them. Still, that was his criticism as he patted his fox terrier called Fussy, for whom his affection was wonderful. The little dog was a present from Fred Archer, the great jockey, and was his constant companion, and I remember how great a sorrow it was that on his first visit to America he was unable to take his pet with him.

Fussy herself must have been broken-hearted, for the strangest of things happened. When the day of departure arrived the little dog, accompanying her master to Southampton, by some accident jumped unnoticed out of the railway carriage a station before the Docks were reached. On arrival at the ship's side her loss became known and everything imaginable was done to trace her, but without avail. With a sad heart her master was obliged to sail for America, not only without his little friend but, what was worse, worrying as to what had become of her. Southampton and the surrounding country was searched high and low, but no Fussy. Three days afterwards, however, she was discovered in London on the doorstep of 14A, Grafton Street, the house where Henry Irving had lived for so many years. How she ever got there no one was ever able to fathom. It was supposed that she found her way back to town by following the railway line, but whether this was the case (extraordinary if so), was of small conse-

quence compared with the fact that she was found, and welcomed her master joyously some months later on his return from the States.

Mr. Irving gave me one of Fussy's offspring. I called the pup "Dook," and he had all his mother's lovable traits and instincts. He never left my side, and insisted on following my hansom all through the London traffic, and very often when I thought he was safely shut up at home I used to find him at the theatre waiting for me.

As a child I had never had any great longing to go on the stage. I had few companions, and I was quite content to be always with the dearest, most unselfish woman who ever lived, the angel of our household. I don't remember having any very definite ideas of becoming anything—certainly not an actress.

I think I was able to recite "The Wreck of the Hesperus" passably ; I had been taught singing, and I could step-dance really quite well; indeed, by the age of twelve I had performed a hornpipe in a pantomime at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, for one night, Mrs. Saker, the proprietress of the theatre, with whom I was on a visit, letting me do it more for fun than anything else. I got three encores, and this applause may perhaps have been the first germ of the theatre to enter my blood. And who do you think was the "principal boy" on that occasion, who held my hand and helped me all the evening?—no other than the never-to-be surpassed Vesta Tilley. Then, as they say in the story books, the years rolled on and I reached the mature age of fifteen.

CHAPTER II

"BEGINNERS, PLEASE"

IT was now for the first time that the Stage, with a very large capital "S," absorbed me, and began to loom large on my small horizon. I think my father must have noticed this, as I was always asking him questions about what went on at the theatre, and as he never tired of explaining the things I wanted to know, I determined to give him a surprise by performing a little one-act play called *Cupid's Messenger*, the author of which, Alfred Calmour, was a great friend of ours. There were four characters in it, and it was played in our back drawing-room. It was written in blank verse, and its period was of the doublet, hose and dagger days. The part I was venturing on in this romantic little piece had originally been played by Miss Kate Rorke in London. I am sure my father knew what was going on, though he pretended not to, and it must have amused him greatly, for Mr. Calmour, who, though a minor poet, was a bad actor, played my lover, and mother took the other female character and sang a song to the guitar. At any rate *my* interest in the proceedings

must have impressed father, for he told Mr. Beerbohm Tree that he was sure I wanted to go on the stage, and, as later events proved, Mr. Tree remembered what my father had said.

The play was duly produced in the drawing-room and I must say I enjoyed it. The praise of my father and his friends delighted me, and then, because I was only fifteen, I forgot all about it and the stage receded into the background again.

The next move on the part of the Fates, who intended me to become an actress, was sudden and really wonderful. It reads like a fairy story. It was one wet February afternoon, to be quite accurate, the fourteenth of that month—Valentine's Day—that, sitting at the piano singing probably " Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low," which was what " A Room with a View " is to-day, a fairy knocked at the front door disguised as a telegraph boy. A wire! and for me!! This in itself was enough to make me feel extremely important, for wires were not a habit as they are to-day. I opened it and found it was from Mr. Tree, and I read it, not quite believing that it could be real. It ran : " Come up at once, Cissie Freake taken ill, no understudy play part to-night in *Cupid's Messenger*.—Tree." Not " Will you play the part to-night ? " but just the one word " play." " And why not," I said to myself, " to-night as well as any other night ? " You see I was only fifteen.

I got ready at once, set off with my mother's maid and arrived at the Haymarket Theatre,

excited perhaps but not in the slightest degree nervous.

Mr. Tree looked at me a little dubiously and said : " Are you really going to play it ? " and without the slightest hesitation I said : " Of course I am." You see I was only fifteen.

I was given the dress, which consisted of a cloak, tights and fairly high boots. I knew very little about the trials of tights in those days, and I had no theories as to how to keep them from creasing, and what do you think I did ? I slipped off my dress and pulled them on over my underclothes, and you must remember that little girls of fifteen did not wear flimsy *crêpe de Chine* in 1887. These necessary, and in those days unmentionable, garments were generally made of cambric, slightly starched, and surrounded with a good deal of lace. I thought nothing of how I looked. The one idea in my mind was to go on and try and repeat my success of our back drawing-room.

The curtain rose ; I waited for my cue. It came and I walked on the stage, and to my surprise I heard a sudden shout of laughter from the audience. It didn't in the least unnerve me. You see I was fifteen. Suddenly in the prompt corner I caught sight of Mr. Tree, and he was also highly amused. I came off at the end of the scene and heard applause. It was glorious—the first applause from a London audience.

I suppose it was then that the desire to act first awakened in me. Before this it had only stirred in its sleep.

Mr. Tree was very kind, patted me on the cheek

and said that he would like me to play the part for a week. " But," he added slyly, " you needn't wear quite so many clothes. The theatre isn't at all cold." I looked down and realized why the audience had laughed so heartily, but I don't think I blushed. You see I was only fifteen.

At the end of the week I was given £5, and with this, the first money I had ever earned, I bought a small ruby ring with two little diamonds as a souvenir. I called it Herbert, after him.

One night not long after this my father came home from the Adelphi full of his usual high spirits and said : " Ellie darling, I think it would be a splendid thing for you to go on the stage."

Mother and I thought he was joking, but he went on to explain that he was doing nothing of the kind, and that he had, in fact, that very afternoon spoken to Charles Wyndham about me, and that he had made an appointment for the great actor to see me on the following morning.

I am not sure what father must have said to Mr. Wyndham, but, knowing him to be a superlative optimist, I am certain that he told the lessee of the Criterion Theatre that not only was I the most beautiful girl in the world, but that Bernhardt could not hold a candle to me and that as a comedienne Mrs. John Wood was non-existent. His news frightened me a little I think, but whether I was elated or not at the prospect of becoming an actress I can hardly remember.

My mother I don't think was over-enthusiastic, but my father, with his debonair manner and exuberance, swept her and myself, as he did everyone

else, off our feet, and with a big kiss told me to go to bed early, get up and make myself look my best and be ready to start with him punctually in the morning.

Never has any man been given a better nickname than the one William Terriss had ; he was known affectionately to all London as " Breezy Bill."

I often look back to that morning journey on the District Railway to Charing Cross with my father. I knew so little of the struggle it was for most girls to get on the stage, let alone to be taken to one of England's greatest managers, that I didn't realize how lucky I was to have someone who, having an open sesame to everyone, could do this for me. It all seemed to come in the day's march. Afterwards, when I had made my own little name and I was being asked continually by countless girls to help them to get an opening in Theatre-land, I appreciated to the full how easy my path had been made. I had been taken first-hand to the successor of Charles Mathews, and had been walked straight into his presence with a laugh and a smile from my " Breezy Bill," and was given a contract on the spot. It all seemed so easy. But no one knows better than I do of the difficulty it would be to obtain such an introduction to-day, for a girl without influence.

And thinking of this I am reminded of the many anxious mothers who have asked me the eternal question, " Is the Theatre a dangerous place for a young girl in which to seek her living ? " My reply has always been : " What sort of a girl have you got ? " Why ask such ridiculous questions

about my profession? Do you inquire what sort of man the gentleman is whom your other girl does typing for? Why worry about the stage? It is an extremely hard-working, and in many cases a heart-breaking profession. There is more clamour than glamour about it. The whole question is: " What about your girl? " If she is inclined to be an idiot she will succeed in being one in whatever sphere of life she finds herself. Why single out the stage as a forcing-house of evil? It is nothing of the kind. Men are men and women are women and fools are fools. Why imagine the theatre to be the one place young women are to be frightened of? It is perfectly true that a girl is likely to meet much more clever and attractive men in a stage career than she has ever known before, and also that if she is pretty is likely to be made love to. Why not? It is the duty of all men to pay attention to women, but it is by no means necessary that a girl should do wrong because she is on the stage any more than she would if she were a governess, or the secretary of a City magnate. Girls, especially to-day, are extremely clever, sophisticated individuals, and it is seldom that any particular environment influences them. It is themselves, their wide-open-eyed selves, who are to blame for whatever step they choose to take.

Love is made in country lanes, on ball-room staircases and in crowded thoroughfares, and so it has ever been since hedgerows were grown, staircases built or roadways made, and love will go on being made even in aeroplanes until that hour when this funny old world of ours crashes through space

unnoticed by the other millions of worlds who through the ages have been its neighbours.

If I had a girl who was not very reliable I don't think I should choose the stage for her as an antidote for her lack of common sense, for, as I say, she would be meeting brains perhaps better than her own, and the theatre is certainly a show window for vanity if people are stupid enough to indulge in such an absurdity. But, at the same time, any parents can be quite sure that their girl is no more likely to come to harm in the theatre than she would be if she spent her time idling in society. Indeed, she would probably run less risk there as she would be working hard if she was serious about her art, and not spending her days and nights trying to find some new excitement with which to fill them.

Personally I wish someone would write a book called "The Stage: How to go on it—and why to keep off it"; then would be demonstrated very thoroughly reasons in most cases for keeping off it. It wouldn't be the question of the danger of the stage—it would mean the very serious consideration as to the absolute incapacity of most of the young women who go on it for doing anything other than wandering about as pretty dolls. As a hare-lip doesn't make an elocutionist or a club-foot a dancer, why should anyone with a pretty face and nothing else imagine for a moment that she can succeed in one of the most difficult of all professions? No, you inquiring parents, you would be wise if you said to yourselves, not, "Is it a moral danger for my girl to become an actress?"

but, " Is she really equipped in any way whatever to become an artist of any kind ? " and then you would be asking a question which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (if you are really intelligent) you could answer yourself in the negative.

But I have digressed from my journey on the District Railway. My apology must be that I hope this little book will catch the eye of the dozens of people who are always asking me the same questions about their offspring.

Some of the reasons put forward to me as a recommendation why Emma or Aggie should become an actress are so comic that they are almost unbelievable. I have had letters in many of which parents feel sure their girl would succeed if she got a chance on the stage because that either her father is a distinguished soldier or that the girl has taken prizes at school for elocution (one lady spelt it electrocution, which seems a thing devoutly to be hoped for, for any reciter), or again that the young person took a prize in a beauty competition at Boretown-on-the-Mud last summer.

Now what have any of these things got to do with Art ? Should a man who makes picture frames imagine he can paint, or a maker of boxing gloves think he is certain to become the world's champion ? No, no. The first question any girl thinking of joining the theatrical profession should ask herself is : " What *right* have I to go on the stage ? " and if this can be answered truthfully, and she feels that she is really well equipped to embark upon an unknown sea, then let her be very sure that the theatre, though it may not make her a better woman

than any other profession could do, it will certainly not, as a calling, make her a worse one.

I hope I shall not be considered hard in my small curtain lecture to inquiring mothers. I am sure I don't mean to be cruel, to be unkind ; all I mean to convey is that if any young lady is thinking of becoming an actress I hope she will think very carefully before she does so, and say to herself seriously : " Am I doing this because I have an overpowering ' call ' and feel that I *can* and *will* succeed, even if the first years of my work mean drudgery ? " or " Am I simply taking the pleasant line of least resistance to avoid having to earn my living in a less humdrum way ? "

If, young lady, you can answer the first part of this question to your own satisfaction, then by all means have no fear, but if you have the least doubt that you are only making the stage an easy means of escape, shun it as you would the Plague, for it is a will-o'-the-wisp which leads the unfitted into a morass of disappointment.

But to return to that eventful morning at the Criterion Theatre, and that marvellous actor Mr. Wyndham. He was very kind, laughed and teased me because I was so young, told me if I worked hard some day perhaps I might become a Mrs. Siddons, and, patting my cheek and smiling, told me that I could start my career under his management, and that he would give me an engagement for three years.

For the first year I was to receive a guinea a week, for the second year £8 a week, and for the

third year £12 a week. Shall I ever forget my feelings as I stepped out of his private office into Piccadilly Circus?

"Now you're an actress," my father said (as ever, the optimist), and I rushed home to tell my mother the great news. I was a wage-earner. A guinea a week was not princely, but look what the future held—£400 a year, and then £600, and even then I should only be eighteen. What might not the future hold?

A few days afterwards I was called to the theatre. My first year had started, and I began work in real earnest with the most trying of all things, understudy rehearsals. The company and everybody connected with the Criterion were very kind to me, and every night that I arrived at the stage door I loved the work more and more.

One thing which struck me as funny about the theatre was that while the stage door-keeper's name was *Wise*, Miss Mary Moore's maid was called *Gay*, and the stage manager's name was *Bright*. Perhaps that's why I was always bright and gay, and I hope never unwise.

Every evening during the performance I used to sit in the prompt corner watching Miss Mary Moore and, looking at her pretty face, wonder if I should ever make such a name as she had, and my eyes were always riveted on Charles Wyndham in every scene he played. What a master!

While he was by no means a good-looking man from the picture-postcard point of view, what charm and fascination were his. His amazing vitality was compelling in the extreme, his knowledge

of stagecraft abnormal, and being a perfect actor himself, he was capable at production time of making even a dummy act. Ah! and what a smile he had, a crooked, whimsical one it was which dealt death and destruction to my sex in every part of the auditorium, and his voice, though perhaps a little rasping and strident, had such music in it that it made the most ordinary love scene sound like a poem spoken in a moonlit wood.

One of my most treasured possessions is a photograph he gave me of himself, and on which he wrote: "With love to Ella, my dramatic godchild." And, indeed, he *was* my theatre-godfather to whom I shall be for ever grateful and for whose memory I shall always have the deepest affection.

I had not been at the Criterion long when I was given the understudy of Miss Mary Moore's part of Ada Ingot in *David Garrick*.

Imagine this at the age of fifteen and a half, and then, more wonderful still, I was suddenly called upon to play it, my first attempt being at a matinée at Brighton for which I received at the end of the week one shilling and threepence, this being the amount due to me over and above my guinea salary for eight performances. But I didn't measure my remuneration in shillings and pence. I knew I was receiving untold gold in being taught my business by such a magician as Charles Wyndham.

I played the part again at a matinée at the Crystal Palace, and never shall I forget the thrill after the performance, of walking with the great actor through the crowds who waited to see him leave the stage door. Even now I can hear him

saying: " Take my arm, child, and smile, smile at them—smile."

What a personality he had and what perpetual youth. They say that Charles Mathews " walked through the stage door an old man of seventy-six and bounded before his audience a boy of eighteen." Well, I saw Charles Wyndham at rehearsal jump over the footlights into the stalls when he was well over sixty.

Long after I had flown (not because of it) Sir Charles Wyndham stepped into his later period and produced such pieces as *The Liars*, *Mrs. Dance's Defence*, etc., many of which with very little alteration would, I think, be as fresh to-day as they were on their first production.

His authors always owed a great debt to Charles Wyndham. He was such a master of construction that he could twist a faulty situation with unerring skill and galvanize indifferent dialogue into something which seemed to possess a world of meaning.

One thing he made a practice of doing, which I have never heard of anyone else insisting upon, was to call a rehearsal once a month, however well the play was going, to rehearse the laughs, nothing but the laughs. He knew how slackness might let them slip away, and the laughs were rehearsed religiously with the lines that led up to them, so that there was no chance of there becoming a titter where once had been a roar. It is a pity this isn't done to-day. It would help to keep the tired actor-golfer up to the mark.

It was during the three years of mine at the Criterion that my father persuaded Augustin

Daly to bring the entire Daly Company over to London. I think, indeed, that he was in a small way interested in the venture, and his judgment was right, for Ada Rehan, John Drew, Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Otis Skinner, May Irwin and all of them took the town by storm.

Their comedies, most of them adapted from the French by Mr. Daly, were inimitable. Though fine as *The Taming of the Shrew* was, and Ada Rehan was a superb Catherine, their American pronunciation of Shakespeare's verse fell at times somewhat strangely on English ears. So much so, indeed, that one of the biggest laughs I ever heard in a theatre was when, some years afterwards, they were again playing in London, Seymour (that's my husband, you know, though up to now in this book you haven't met him), appearing on the stage at the Court Theatre in a revue called *Under the Clock*, dressed as Richard Cœur de Lion, on being asked who he was by one of the characters, replied in a New York twang, "I am Richard, King of England, and don't you forget it." The audience yelled.

The fact, however, that they spoke Shakespeare's language in a new way didn't make them any the less splendid actors, and their productions were perfect.

Mr. Daly himself was a strange man. He often came to our house, and always wore a half top hat made of felt, and never smiled. This is my youthful memory of him.

Thinking of the Criterion, it may be news to a great many people to learn that Messrs. Spiers and

Pond built the theatre for no other purpose than that they felt a place of entertainment in their new Piccadilly building would be something that might be the means of attracting the public to come to their hotel and restaurant.

So little did they consider the theatre as a commercial proposition in itself that they were ready to let it at the nominal rental of £100 a year, simply in the hope that its audience would patronize their catering in all departments when the curtain fell. Dear old Mr. Charles Somerset has told me how, as a young man, he was repeatedly offered the house on the longest of leases for this ridiculous sum, but being young and unsure of himself, he let the opportunity slip by. If you want to take the Criterion Theatre to-day, I think the rent is £300 a week without the bars.

I don't know if Mr. Spiers and Mr. Pond are still alive; if they are not, they must be turning in their graves every evening at eight o'clock. It was ultimately let, I think I am right in saying, to Mr. William Duck for £50 a week, these being the terms on which it is held, I am told, by the present proprietors.

Charles Wyndham appeared at the Criterion in the first instance under the management of Mr. Duck, and many amusing stories are told of this quite uneducated early Victorian entrepreneur. It was H. J. Byron who, when he was away with him at Plymouth, said to him, " Hulloa, Duck, where have you been all the morning ? " Duck replied, " I have been taking a turn round the 'Oe," to which the great humorist wittily replied,

"Have you? Then don't you think it's time you took a turn round the 'H'?"

From what one hears of Mr. Duck, he must have contributed largely to the gaiety of nations, for on one occasion, inquiring of his stage manager what that gentleman thought of a young lady he had just engaged, and being told by him that she was a *perfect ingénue*, he thought for a moment, and then said: "Well, all you must do is to call her to rehearsal and tell her about it." It will be seen that even in mid-Victorian days there were some managers who had not been to a public school.

In mentioning the rentals and expenses of bygone times and comparing them with the colossal handicap the theatre is under to-day, I was shown a letter recently from Buckstone, the famous comedian and for so long lessee of the old Haymarket Theatre, written to his friend Chippendale, and in it he said: "I am afraid, my dear Chip., that I shall be unable to run the Haymarket much longer. The expenses are enormous. It costs me nearly £50 a performance to take my curtain up." Fifty pounds for everything—rent, salaries, advertising included. I wonder what Queen Victoria's favourite comedian would think if he were alive to-day.

The Charles Wyndham Company was a particularly fine one in 1887, including, as it did, such stalwarts as George Giddens, William Blakeley, Herbert Standing, Emily Miller, Lottie Venne, Rose Saker, Mrs. Edmund Phelps and Mary Moore (now Lady Wyndham), all of them being pre-eminent in their own lines of business. And

at the head of this list of famous players was the greatest of all Sir Peter Teazles, Mr. William Farren. He was, in addition to being one of the finest actors who ever adorned our stage, a great and courtly gentleman, kindly and considerate to the beginner, and with a head and face which Flint would have bidden daily to his canvas.

Of all the eccentrics who ever lived, I should think that old Mr. Blakeley was the most amusing figure of fun that ever stepped. He was a genuine low comedian of the old-fashioned type, who got roars of laughter the moment he opened his mouth. Fat and bald-headed off the stage, he was just as unconsciously funny as he was on it. Sometimes, may I say it, he was apt to dine extremely well, and when this happened Mr. Wyndham used to tease him unmercifully.

The old gentleman, never knowing he was having his leg pulled, generally began to puff and blow, and always ended up by getting into a rage, which was exactly what his manager wanted, as on these occasions Blakeley, who had a trick of putting out his tongue and slapping the back of his hands, was a delight to watch. He said many funny things apparently unconsciously. One of his most famous remarks was made on his first visit to America. There had been great difficulty in persuading him to leave England with the Criterion Company, and he grumbled his way without stopping from Liverpool to Sandy Hook.

On arrival at New York he left the docks and got on a Sixth Avenue horse tramcar. They were rickety old things, and as he stepped on behind

without waiting for it to stop, he slipped and found himself sitting with his bag in the mud. All he did was to throw up his hands to heaven and splutter out: "There, Mr. Charles Wyndham, I told you I should hate the infernal country!"

His son, the late Mr. William Blakeley, Jun., was also a very funny actor and originally started as the low comedian of Mr. Clifford Essex' Pierrot Troupe. The most curious accident happened to him one afternoon. He was singing a song in the open air at Sandown, Isle of Wight, and in the middle of the second verse a wasp flew into his mouth and stung him on the back of the throat. That wasp was by no means a good critic.

Another real character at the Criterion Theatre was Claude, known as "Rufus" because of his Titian hair, the assistant stage manager, a most invaluable servant to Mr. Wyndham. Rufus understood his master as no one else did, and put up with his moods, and they were many, without ever moving a muscle. If anything went wrong in the theatre Rufus always "got it" from the great light comedian (who at the same time was really fond of him and appreciated his many sterling qualities) and was discharged on an average twice a week. It was amusing to watch this little comedy —Charles Wyndham saying: "Rufus, you leave to-night," to which Rufus used to reply: "Yes, Mr. Wyndham," but the next evening he was always there as if nothing had happened. This went on, I believe, for five and twenty years.

Once I said to Rufus: "I thought you were leaving!" "Leaving?" said Rufus, "if I did the

Guv'nor wouldn't know where he was. The theatre would have to be closed!" And really, I do believe that if Rufus had gone suddenly, no one would have been more surprised than the volatile and very often impulsively inconsequent great man himself.

Herbert Standing was a member of the Criterion Company who also had some very marked peculiarities. He was a very fine farce actor, but took little trouble to control his hasty temper. He was in reality a big baby, and always in dispute about nothing with somebody. Some years after my Criterion days he went to Australia as Mrs. Bernard Beere's leading man and quarrelled with her nearly the whole time. When they returned to England, the witty Charles Brookfield, hearing of all the unpleasantness that had taken place, designed a new crest for Mrs. Beere in case she ever wished to return to the Antipodes. It was a boxing kangaroo and underneath was written one word, "*Notwithstanding.*"

CHAPTER III

FATE KNOCKS AT THE DOOR

THE three years at the Criterion slipped by all too quickly and the experience gained there by me was priceless.

The time had now arrived, however, when I had to make up my mind either to sign a new contract with Mr. Wyndham or go into another class of work. My father felt it would be a very good thing for me to get into a school of Drama and thereby learn to broaden my methods, and Mr. Wyndham, who was always kindness itself, thought so too. I therefore accepted an offer to go to the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, to play the heroine of Boucicault's Irish play *Arrah-na-Pogue*, and also to take the leading parts in *After Dark* and the *Lights o' London*.

In those days the Princess's Theatre was one of the most popular houses in London, and it was a great experience to appear before the vast audiences who patronized the house, and hear great roars of laughter and rounds of applause for the first time in my career. Those were the days of hissing the

villain and cheering the hero, and though at first I felt like a fish out of water, the Criterion being a bandbox compared to this house, I soon settled down in my new surroundings, and had the good fortune to make a success there, especially in the part of Arrah-na-Pogue.

There is nothing like a season of Drama for any young actress. It gives breadth of gesture and teaches the uses of the arms above the waist, to speak out and understand that the boy at the back of the gallery who has paid for his seat has as much right to hear what is being said as his better dressed brother in the stalls. The three melodramas which I appeared in certainly made me begin to feel my feet. When the season closed and the theatre was taken over, if I remember rightly, by Mr. Wilson Barrett, who commenced his long series of successes there at this time, I went to the Strand Theatre to play in *The Balloon*.

In mentioning the name of Wilson Barrett, although I think he was never looked upon as a really first-class tragedian, that is to say, of the same superlative excellence as the many giants who flourished about this time, for be it remembered that Mr. Irving was in his zenith, and Salvini, Edwin Booth, Mounet-Sully, Coquelin and many other great artists were appearing at intervals in London, nevertheless he was a very picturesque and effective figure. A most kindly man and much beloved by his company. He was also a very brave one, for at one period of his career he returned to London with forty thousand pounds' worth of debts on his head, being money lost in productions

he had made, and he boldly not only started off to pay this large sum but, in fact, did so.

It has always struck me as very strange why he was generally looked upon by the critics and the highbrow as of not very great importance in his art, and how it was that comedians used him continually for burlesque purposes. This may have been because, possessor as he was of a face cast in the Roman mould, he elected to take particular care of his personal appearance, and never appeared in any sort of part unless his hair was beautifully curled and his throat and chest, even in a dinner jacket, very generously exposed. His voice was clear and powerful, but he spoke in a somewhat stilted and very staccato manner which robbed his rendering of the text of naturalness. Still, he was a great favourite with the masses, and his Claudian and his Hamlet made a very great impression on my childish mind.

George Giddens came to the Strand from the Criterion for *The Balloon*. Such a dear he was, always happy and smiling, and a farce actor in the first flight, while his Squire Chivey and Tony Lumpkin being superlatively good, when he appeared on the stage in the costume of this period he might well have stepped out of one of De Wilde's frames. It was not strange, I think, that he excelled in bumpkin parts, as he adored sport and the country. He shot well, and as a dry-fly fisherman had few equals.

I remember him making me laugh very much one day at rehearsal, in telling me a story about an acquaintance of his who had asked a Cockney friend

to come down and spend a few days with him in the country. One morning the host's solicitors arrived and he, having important business matters to transact, was obliged to neglect his friend from London. However, not wishing him to be dull, he said: "I know you'll excuse me till lunch time, won't you? You'll find plenty to do about the place without me. Here is a gun and a couple of dogs. Go out and have a bit of sport." This the Cockney friend did, but he returned in half an hour and said: "Have you got any more dogs?"

Following *The Balloon*, which was quite a success, I played in *Æsop's Fables* with W. S. Penley at the same house, and he used to make me laugh whenever I looked at him either on or off the stage. On one occasion I remember he (I blush to own it) made me laugh so much in a scene that I was very glad when it finished. After the curtain had fallen on the act he came up to me, secretly delighted that he had made me lose control of myself, and said: "Tell me, was I *so* very funny?" I said: "Yes," and he in his quaint private secretary drawl replied: "Oh! do you know I am *so* glad," and I'm sure he was. The essence of his inimitable humour was his tremendous earnestness, for when he used to say: "Do you know, I don't *like* London," the audience really felt that he didn't like it, and this is why they yelled at him and made the line a catch-word for nearly three years.

I was now receiving £15 per week, and felt a millionairess. During this season Mr. Arthur Chudleigh of the Court Theatre, who from that

day to this has been one of my dearest friends, offered me an engagement to go down to Sloane Square and play in various comedies he was producing, he having dissolved partnership with Mrs. John Wood. This sounds rather as if I went to play her parts, but oddly enough this was not so, as I was only twenty years of age. Here I also procured the longest engagement of my life under the management of a gentleman by the name of Mr. Seymour Hicks, but of the terms of this domestic contract it is a little too early to speak. I can only say that the engagement itself was the happiest any young actress could hope for, and its conditions have never at any time been onerous.

During my first season under Mr. Chudleigh's management, I played in *The Guardsman*, by Cecil Raleigh (Arthur Cecil was in the cast) and also in *The Amazons*, by Sir Arthur Pinero. Weedon Grossmith and inimitable Fred Kerr played the principal male parts in Sir Arthur's piece, and wonderful they were in it.

Lily Hanbury, who was as sweet as she was lovely, and to whom I was devoted, Pattie Browne and myself played three young ladies in knickerbockers, a daring innovation in those days, and for quite a long time we were very self-conscious.

After these two pieces came *The Pantomime Rehearsal*, and it was while I was playing in this extraordinarily funny burlesque on Society amateurs that Mr. Oscar Barrett asked Mr. Chudleigh if he would release me for the following Christmas to play the part of Cinderella at the Lyceum Theatre. It seemed a great chance for

me, and my dear Chuddles, as he is always called, very kindly agreed to give me the required permission. *The Pantomime Rehearsal* was written by Cecil Clay, made famous in America by his talented wife, Rosina Vokes, Brandon Thomas and Weedon Grossmith, and again made famous in England by the drolleries of Weedon Grossmith, Brandon Thomas, Willie Elliott and Wilfred Draycott, the principal female characters being in the hands of Miss Gertrude Kingston, Miss Decima Moore and myself. The play from first to last, I think, ran over four hundred nights.

The days of the Court were joyous ones indeed. We were like one big family, with Arthur Chudleigh as a happy mother disguised as a jolly schoolboy.

I wonder if ever there were such a really charmingly delightful set of people gathered together in one theatre as in those old Court days.

Dear little Weedon Grossmith, the quaintest of low comedians, was a droll of drolls, and the more serious he got, on or off the stage, the funnier he became. He married my pretty friend, Miss May Palfrey, who was also a member of the Court company.

When I heard of the engagement, I remember thinking to myself: "May is a very lucky girl, but I wonder how she managed to keep a straight face when Weedon proposed?" I don't think I could have done so had he honoured me with his affection. But this doesn't mean that anyone who knew him could have done anything but love him.

I remember once when we were watching a rather wooden actor rehearsing, Weedon said: "A great study of still life, isn't he?" and that night he brought me down a small oil painting (he originally intended to become an artist) of a cocoanut, and upon it was a piece of paper on which was written: "Another study of still life."

Then there was Brandon Thomas, who was a perfect dear. He was tremendously earnest in everything he undertook, and was splendid in every part he played. He was an emotional man with very fine feelings, a great patriot and an enthusiastic volunteer officer. It will be news to many that the first version of *Charley's Aunt* he wrote was as full of sentiment as it was of comedy. After its initial production the broad fun of the story swamped much that was the author's original intention, for those who knew the play in its original form will remember that there was a quite beautiful scene which Mr. Thomas had written between the young men and the old officer who had returned from India and who was giving advice to the two undergraduates in the shadow of a College Close to the accompaniment of a distant organ.

It was during this happy time at the little house in Sloane Square that the ladies who I understand are the spinners of human destinies must have thought it was about time they turned their attention to me again, and, without my being conscious of the fact, the name of Hicks was becoming familiar to me.

It didn't mean anything very much in particular, but somehow I suppose the Fates had determined

to get me accustomed by degrees to this not particularly poetic sound. The first time I remember it being mentioned to me directly was by father. I had been to a matinée, and was dining with him at Simpson's in the Strand, a favourite place of his—the original Simpson's, where the rats came out every night into the big room upstairs looking nearly as old as the waiters of that historic English eating-house. During the meal he turned to me and said: "Why don't you go and see a play to-night, and pick me up afterwards, and we can go home together?" I felt tired and said "No." I thought I would get back early. "Oh! I should stay up if I were you," he continued, "and make a day of it. Why not go and see *Walker, London* at Toole's Theatre. It is a jolly play and there's an excellent young actor in it called Seymour Hicks. I'm sure you'll enjoy yourself."

But I had been in town from early morning, and I said: "No, not to-night. I really don't feel like seeing another piece or Seymour Hicks or anyone else." "He's very good," father persisted. "I dare say he is, darling," I said, "but I'd rather go home," and so home I went.

This was the Fates' first tap at the window of my heart. Later they tried the door, for while sitting at breakfast about a week afterwards, father said: "Oh, by the way, Ella dear, young Hicks, the lad I spoke to you about the other day, is coming down this afternoon at half-past two to read me a play." "How old is he?" I asked. "Oh! about twenty-one, or something of that sort, I think," father said. "Rather young to write plays, isn't he?" I

remember saying. "He's written two or three," came the answer. Two or three plays at twenty-one? Fairly industrious, I thought, and I became a little curious.

At half-past two to the minute the front door bell rang, and peeping over the top of the stairs I caught sight of the back view of a slim-looking boy being shown into the drawing-room. I didn't want very much to meet him, but I thought I'd have a look at him through the keyhole.

Why I wanted to I don't know. However, I had a peep—he was leaning over a manuscript, reading very earnestly to father. Not good looking, I thought, and I can't say I was much impressed, anyhow not impressed enough to make a stage entrance with the usual line, "Father dear! Oh! I didn't know you were engaged." So I put on my hat and went out for a walk. When I returned the youthful author had gone.

"His play is not half bad," father said. "A bit crude, but not half bad—all about fighting on the Indian Frontier and that sort of thing. Lots of good stuff in it, but not quite right. Anyhow, as I told the boy, never touch India on the stage. It is always a failure, except in the one case of the Relief of Lucknow play *Jessie Brown*, but he'll do something some day."

And he did. He married me.

Little did father know how prophetic his words were. "Why didn't you come in and meet him?" father inquired. I don't know to this day why I didn't. It would probably have altered my whole life if I had. For if young Hicks, as father called

him, had fallen in love with me then, I'm perfectly certain father would have promptly knocked the whole thing on the head. The Fates knew this, that's why I suppose they arranged that I should not meet the young man from Toole's Theatre that afternoon. But they had something else in their work-basket.

I was composing little tunes about this time, and I had just finished two songs for which I had no words. The Fates whispered: "Ask the young man you saw through the keyhole to write some for you." And I did. The Fates must have been jogging his elbow too, as for some unaccountable reason he treasured my first letter to him, and he wouldn't part with it to-day for anything. I took both the songs to Mr. William Boosey and they were published by Chappell's. This was the first time the name of Hicks and Terriss appeared in print together. Oddly enough we didn't meet and nothing happened that had any bearing on what the future held in store for me until after my father's departure for America with Henry Irving, when the name of Seymour Hicks cropped up again.

A one-act play by him called *The New Sub*, which proved a great success, was produced at the Court as part of the famous triple bill, of which *The Pantomime Rehearsal* was the backbone. Hicks! I heard it quite often in the theatre. Hicks! and I was getting accustomed to it.

It then so happened that the next piece to be produced at the Court was a play called *The Other Fellow*, in which I was cast for the *ingénue* part. It

was an adaptation from the French. As rehearsals proceeded everyone realized that it was not quite long enough for a whole evening's entertainment, and that a first piece would be needed. My part in *The Other Fellow* was not a long one, and Arthur Chudleigh suggested that I should play in a curtain raiser. He told me he had got a very good little musical duologue called *His Last Chance*. Now father had always told me on no account to play in any more one-act plays, as they would do me no good, and I was just about to refuse tactfully when my cherubic manager continued: "And young Seymour Hicks would be A1 in the other part. Would you like to play it with him?" What made me say "Yes," I don't know, but I did.

So Arthur Chudleigh took me upstairs to his office and introduced me to my life-long partner in a way which only that old darling would do. "Ella dear," he said, "this is Seymour. I've known him since he was eighteen. He can't act, but he's not a bad chap."

What followed during the next fortnight I didn't remember at the time, and so certainly can't remember now. I think Seymour began making love to me before he knew anything about his part.

At first I wasn't quite sure whether he really was doing so, as I had never been made love to before, but I wasn't very long in doubt on the subject, and to my astonishment I was very pleased. Talk about a citadel being laid siege to. No troops in a Napoleonic Campaign were ever flung against their

Photo : Bassano.

As Phœbe Throssel in "Quality Street,"
at the Vaudeville Theatre

objective by "the little Corporal" with more determination than were the battalions of little boys with bows and arrows which my young man led to the attack.

After the first two or three days we were never apart, as when rehearsals at the theatre were over he used to come home, and I spent hours trying to din the musical numbers of the little play into his head, two of which were very difficult, as he had to sing seconds to me. At times, Heaven knows what he sang (here may I state that he has since confessed that he tried to appear more stupid than he was so as to be with me as much as possible), and Edward Jones, the conductor, and composer of many charming melodies, and I came to the conclusion that although my new friend might be a good actor, as a singer he would never get medals of any kind.

Mother took a tremendous fancy to father's "young Hicks," and encouraged him so much that one day, before I knew where I was, I had been kissed seriously for the first time in my life. I heard, also for the first time, that I was the loveliest girl in the world, and in fact was listening to what hundreds of other girls were listening to at the same moment all over the world.

Here was a complication—father in America, a young man who would take no refusal, and I'm bound to say I didn't want to give him one, and my mother, being a romantic angel, helping him in every possible way the moment she knew, almost before I did myself, that I had fallen in love. Well, there is no need to enlarge on the oldest of old

stories except to say that I was proposed to, that I accepted, and that the three of us held a council of war and decided I had better cable father ! ! ! This I did in the following manner : " *Dearest Father, may I become engaged to Seymour Hicks? Devoted love, Ellie.*" The reply, which came in less time than we thought possible, was a message without hope. It ran : " *Stop this nonsense. Wait till my return. Love, Father.*" Here was a bomb-shell.

That evening at the theatre I began for the first time to realize that I was taking a very important step, and for the moment, losing courage, I went to Arthur Chudleigh and asked him if he thought Seymour was really a nice young man. " Nice," said he. " Of course he is. A jolly good chap. A capital fellow."

He little knew that his jocular reply was the great deciding factor in my life. I went home very happy and quite contented with my jolly good chap. The next day another council of war was held, and the conclusion Seymour and I came to, aided and abetted by mother, was that rather than wait for ten months for father's return, with probably little prospect of his consenting when he *did* arrive, the thing to do was to take the plunge at once unless we gave up all idea of getting married.

It was very naughty, I know, to go against father, but there you are; as someone said : " Love laughs at Lockharts," and Seymour and myself having an engagement for three years with Mr. Chudleigh, our combined salaries being £22 a week with an increase each year, everything seemed

splendid. I think I had about two hundred pounds in the bank, but Seymour had nothing. A special licence was obtained, and within three weeks from the day "young Hicks" had been introduced to me I became his wife.

CHAPTER IV

I LOVE—HE HONOURS AND OBEYS

WE were married at the Brentford Registry Office, at eleven o'clock on the morning of October 3rd, 1893. At ten o'clock I walked to Bedford Park Station dressed in a little blue serge dress with a blue straw hat trimmed with two white wings. The train my bridegroom was to arrive by came in—my heart beat quickly, but lo —behold no bridegroom! Had he changed his mind? I wondered. Was I a deserted heroine, and should I go back home? These were the thoughts that immediately filled my mind. No, something must have happened that wasn't his fault. I felt sure of that. So I sat down on the platform to wait.

In a quarter of an hour the next train came in, and out jumped my young man. He had overslept himself. He was desperately sorry. I was all forgiveness, and taking the first hansom off the rank, we got into it, and held hands all the way to Brentford. If that cab had been an omen of what our lives were to be we should have turned back, for it rocked from side to side the whole way, and

I'm sure must have been the one in which Noah left the Ark.

On arrival at the Registrar's office, which we found after making inquiries at a tobacconist's shop, we were ushered into the presence of the man who was to make us one for better or for worse. "Where are your witnesses?" we were asked. We hadn't any, so two men who were loafing near the doorway were each given five shillings, and they stood next us, the only attendants at our great event, one of them, named Harris, being slightly intoxicated.

One of the questions put to me as the document was being filled in was: "Is your father alive?" to which Seymour answered "Very." The Registrar looked up and said he was glad to hear it. Seymour and I looked at each other a little timidly. The ring was put on and we left by the same doors as we had come in, to find that a crowd of small children and customers from the neighbouring shops were waiting to see us come out. The tobacconist had guessed our secret, and had called his neighbours to see the poor young couple who, no doubt as he thought, were asking for trouble.

We got into our old hansom and left Brentford to the accompaniment of laughter from the grown-ups and jeers from the children. Our wedding breakfast was a strange one. It was Irish stew at the Café Monico. Later as we walked down to Charing Cross, Seymour held me at arm's-length and kept saying: "Isn't she pretty? Look at her!" and people who passed us turned round, and I was very glad to get in the train for home.

I little thought he'd be behaving like this thirty-four years afterwards, but he often does.

How happy we were! The only cloud that hung over us was the thought of what father would say when he received the cable I had sent him: "*Dear Father, I have married Seymour Hicks. Love, Ella.*" Heaven knows, I wouldn't have hurt him for all the world, but a long time afterwards Ellen Terry told me she was with him when my message arrived, and that he cried like a child. I'm glad I didn't see him do that. Anyhow, I'm thankful to say that when he knew how really happy I was, he too was as pleased as if he had given me his consent.

For four years he saw Seymour almost every day, and was very, very fond of him. From the time we met him on Victoria Station, on his return from the States, when he greeted us both with great affection and delight, he never said one word about what I had done, or blamed either of us in any way whatever.

We both appeared at the Court Theatre on our wedding night. In *The Other Fellow*, the young man who played the hero of the piece had to make violent love to me. I played the part of a runaway bride, and every time I opened my mouth he used to kiss me ecstatically. Seymour stood in the wings and watched, and from his face I still don't believe that he admired either my acting or that of my stage lover's.

This same young man did me the honour to fall in love with me, and proposed some days after I had married Seymour. We had kept our secret

very carefully and no one guessed anything, for I lived at home for the first week after my marriage. At the Brentford office I had, of course, exchanged the " property " brass wedding ring which I wore in the play for my own one, and one evening the hero suddenly glared at the new bright one and whispered to me hoarsely: " That's not the wedding ring you wore last night. I'll swear that you've married Seymour Hicks."

I don't know what I said, probably: " Don't be silly," or something of the kind. Anyhow, our secret leaked out, as every secret does, and all the people in the theatre were greatly excited and very kind.

We only received three wedding presents. One was a pair of decanters from dear Arthur Pinero; another from an actor friend of Seymour's, Mr. Ackerman May, who sent us a silver fruit dish, and the third from Ellen Terry, who sent me an ivory brooch from America.

We lived in furnished rooms when we were first married. What a couple of children we were indeed. I was even younger in many ways than my years. I had always lived at home, and my father had invariably come to fetch me at the theatre every evening. I had met a great many people, but had had very little experience in the mild love affairs in which the average young girl indulges, and it was a long time before I got over being terribly shy of my own husband.

When I had to meet his mother and grandmother for the first time I nearly died of fright. His mother thought that I looked much too young to

be married at all, and insisted that I should wear a little bonnet, rather like the ones which Mrs. Kendal always wore. I remember well it had blue flowers round the edge. I don't know that it really made me look much older, and I'm certain it did not make me look the least bit like Mrs. Kendal.

After a few weeks the furnished rooms began to pall, so we moved into Sloane Street and felt terribly smart.

An old friend of Mr. Chudleigh's, Mr. Marler by name, with whom Seymour was afterwards connected in the building of three theatres, found us a maisonette, decorated it for us, really beautifully, furnished it to match and made all this possible by allowing us to pay him for it by instalments.

Our relations, I think, thought we were quite mad, and, to say the least of it, I think we were a little over-venturesome, but it all panned out all right. We were terrible swells with a professed cook at £1 a week, which was very high wages in those days, a maid and a page-boy. All the page-boy did was to quarrel with the cook, and most of the cook's time was taken up by proving herself to be an expert in alcohol. Although we saw her very seldom, we always knew at night when we came back from the theatre whether she was sober or not, for if she had been unwise in her libations she decorated the entire supper table with mustard and cress. She not only put it in the soup but also in the jellies, the custards and round the decanters.

These were trying times for a young housekeeper.

To our new home many celebrated people began to find their way. Sir Herbert Tree, to give him

his later title, lived a few doors off and sometimes looked in upon us after the theatre. That splendid old actor Henry Kemble became a great friend of ours. Henry Hamilton, the author, and Charles Brookfield, the wit, Archie Wortley, the painter, and many other friends of Seymour's from the Beefsteak Club too numerous to mention, all became constant and welcome visitors.

Henry Hamilton and Charles Brookfield were very witty men, but their humour was seldom, if ever, of the kindly sort. It was Henry Hamilton who said to Charles Wyndham, on seeing him sitting in David Garrick's chair at a famous club (the great light comedian was playing David Garrick that season), "Ah! Charles, more like Garrick every day and less like him every night." Those who heard the remark laughed heartily. It was an expensive sally, for I think it cost Hamilton Sir Charles Wyndham's friendship.

I remember my saying to Henry Hamilton one day: "How wonderful it would be to be a great success," and he replied: "Don't you believe it, Ella dear; success is like the sunshine—it brings out all the adders." "Are you referring to newspaper men?" someone said who overheard his remark. "No," said Hamilton quickly, "if I had been I should have called them puff-adders," which was extremely good, though not a thing that would have endeared him to a journalist if one had been present.

At the end of the run of *The Other Fellow* a new triple bill was put up at the Court, the main item of the evening being a revue called *Under the Clock*,

by Charles Brookfield and Seymour. The other two pieces were an operetta called *The Venetian Singer*, in which Mr. Jack Robertson sang charmingly, and a little play by Seymour called *Goodbye*.

Under the Clock was the first real revue produced in London. It was brilliantly witty, but much of it was extremely cruel. I am not exonerating Seymour for his share in the writing of it, but it was Brookfield "let loose," aided and abetted by a young man who was his very apt pupil. Brookfield in a cage was dangerous enough, but, given a roving commission, nearly everybody of note in London, especially in the theatrical profession, was made the most wicked fun of, and the Court Theatre was packed for a long time with people who delighted to see their friends or enemies lampooned.

One of the luckiest things which ever happened to us was the fact that my husband (I was beginning at this time to feel quite married, and on rare occasions was brave enough to say "My husband") had made a great success in this piece.

Mr. George Edwardes heard about him, came down to the Court and offered him a three years' engagement at the Gaiety Theatre. He had made me a similar offer several times, but I had always been advised it would be an unwise thing for me to accept it. However, when he renewed it at the time he was asking Seymour to come to him, a different complexion was put upon things: to be both working together for a long period at one house made us decide to accept the Gaiety engagement if Mr. Chudleigh would release us.

Like the angel that he is, he agreed most generously to do so. "Certainly," he said. "I think it may be a great chance for you both. Take it. I wouldn't think of standing in your way." The only commission he wanted was a big kiss, which I gave him, and without delay everything was settled with Mr. Edwardes that we should both open at his theatre in the following August, it then being November.

Life was splendid! Our marriage had brought us both good luck not only in our home but in our business. Father wrote us every mail giving us all sorts of advice, very little of which was of much use, as events were moving rapidly and we had to make decisions for ourselves, but we kept him informed of all that was going on. He himself had always been a very careful man, and he kept on impressing on us the necessity of saving money, and so gloomy a picture did he often draw of an old age in the gutter if we didn't, that I'm sure he had an idea that we were just at the end of our lives instead of the beginning. His letters to Seymour were naturally at first only friendly, and he signed himself, "Yours very sincerely, Will Terriss," but after a few months one arrived signed "Father," and then we knew that we were both really forgiven, and our happiness was complete.

I think poor mother in the early days of father's return came in for a few little reproaches for not having looked after me more strictly, as father put it, but she was a staunch ally of ours, and her judgment proved to be right, and I know father thought so afterwards. She was wonderful all through our

initial difficulties, and I know she was devoted to Seymour because he was so good to me.

It was about this time that I began seriously to think of becoming a Roman Catholic. I had always wanted to be one, and after having many a talk with that splendid man of the world, Father Bernard Vaughan, on the subject, I was received into the Church by him, a Church which gave me great consolation when I faced, as I had to later, several sad and very heavy blows.

A jollier or more understanding man than Bernard Vaughan it would have been impossible to meet. He was always full of fun and jokes, and was not only a favourite of the late King Edward, but was loved by the humblest of His Majesty's subjects. One of his great gifts was his splendid fearlessness and his facility for being what is called a splendid mixer. He could leave a luncheon table in Park Lane for a slum in Whitechapel and be equally happy in both.

I once heard him at a big dinner party where nearly everyone was someone in the Red Book, finish an argument on religion by saying with a laugh: "Well, disagree with me as much as you like. The fact remains that as you're not Catholics you'll never get to Heaven," and he ended with, "And I'm not sure I shall ever be able to get there either." All I can say is that if Father Vaughan wasn't able to, then it must indeed be a kingdom which is absolutely empty.

It was during my very early married life that I met and became the devoted friend of Mr. Alfred Fripp, now not Sir Alfred but dear Alfred. Never has he failed either Seymour or myself in stress or

trouble, indeed never has he failed anyone. He has a heart like a hotel, and every room in it is occupied by friends. The debt our profession owes him is one that can never be paid. It is greater than England's War Debt to America, but of a very different kind. He has cut Seymour and myself up more successfully than has any critic, but, great surgeon though he is, his kindly eyes have cut far deeper into our hearts than ever his knife would dare. Across them they have carved the words "Undying affection." He has been anything to us but a froth-blower in days and nights of crisis.

The time had now arrived when I had to go to the Lyceum to rehearse for the pantomime.

Its first performance took place on Boxing Day afternoon, and if not *the* most beautiful production of its kind I have ever seen, was, at any rate, very little short. It filled the old Lyceum from floor to ceiling twice daily during the whole of its long run of twelve weeks. Mr. Oscar Barrett, who had been producing successful entertainments of this kind at the Crystal Palace, was a master in this line of work, and he knew how to tell the simple tale of Cinderella as children know it.

He never allowed the comedians to dominate the story or have scenes to themselves simply to be funny in, which had nothing to do with the play, as is so often the case to-day. They were only permitted to be funny *in* the story, and the production itself well deserved the wonderful notice which Clement Scott, who was then the great critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, gave it. He wrote his tremendous praise under the title of "Athwart Fairyland." That

great pantomimist, Charles Lauri, was the cat. He was not a man in a skin, he was a real cat, and as he worked with me throughout the performance I had an opportunity of watching with admiration what a master of his art could do.

It was a wonderful company, and the dresses designed by Wilhelm from the woodland Autumn Leaf Ballet to the Ball-room scene and afterwards, were things which for grace and beauty had never been surpassed in Pantomime before. The dressing of Cinderella herself was a poem, and no picture of the Court of Louis Quinze could have been more exquisite either in conception or execution.

I sat up almost the whole night before we opened making my rag dress : the one which Wilhelm had designed was voted by every one far too elaborate, so my mother and I set to work and made one out of bits and pieces, and I wore it all through the run. I was painted in it and also a statuette was in the Academy the following season.

I may say, without being unduly vain, that I made a really great success in the name part, and I always think the reason of this was that I played the little drudge as I should have played her had I been called upon to do so in a straight play, and, indeed, everyone in the cast worked on these lines.

It was owing to Miss Terry seeing this performance of mine that Mr. Irving asked me to come to him for his next production to create the part of Elaine in *King Arthur*. I had, however, as I mentioned before, signed a three years' contract for the Gaiety Theatre and so this was impossible.

It was flattering in the extreme to be singled

out by Mr. Irving for such a character, and at the time I wondered if I had done wrong in tying myself up to Mr. Edwardes' management. But I am sure now that what I had settled was for the best (indeed, throughout my life I have always tried to think that everything has been for the best), for it started my partnership in the theatre with my husband, a partnership which has been a gloriously happy, and I don't think unsuccessful, one for more than thirty years.

CHAPTER V

I IMITATE COLUMBUS

WHEN *Cinderella* came to an end at the Lyceum, the pantomime was taken over, lock, stock and barrel, to New York, the only change made being that Seymour was cast for the ugly sister, and extraordinarily good he was. The American Press said that he was the finest dancer who had ever come over from England, but he knew that this was only because they could not see his feet. However, he was so nimble and managed his skirts so well that it was small wonder he took them all in.

Although later at the Gaiety he made a great reputation as an eccentric dancer—I know he won't mind my saying so—he, as a step dancer pure and simple and not an eccentric, was only really an expert with his right foot. So much so was this a fact that I remember well at a dress rehearsal dear old Willie Warde calling out to him as he was making an exit with me at the end of a musical number, "Wave your handkerchief above your head, old man. It will take the gallery's attention off your left leg."

Throughout my career Willie Warde arranged nearly all my dances, and it was due to his genius and his power of inventing business and thinking out artistic novelties that I owed at least half my successes in musical comedy.

I have met many great artists in my time, but none greater than this brilliant and lovable man, who always did what so few dance producers are able to do: he designed the steps from the character of the dance and never started work with what the feet *could* do, but what they *should* do. Few people living know how much George Edwardes owed to this comic genius, or how much he relied on him. Had he not been content to take a back seat there was always a golden one waiting vacant in the front row for him to occupy.

The trip to New York was dreadful. We started in a gale and finished in one. Our boat was the old German liner the *Elbe*, of about 6,000 tons; and anything like the weather I have never experienced before or since. Crockery was smashed, water was a foot deep in our cabin, and what with the rushing of sailors on deck shouting at each other in German, the grinding of chains, and the groaning of the ship herself, which all went on to the accompaniment of a brass band in the saloon, never playing to more than a dozen passengers, we were in despair. One night, so terrible was the noise that I became extremely frightened, and I was certain my young man was frightened too, for I heard him singing in the berth above me; this I knew to be a sure sign of nerves on his part, although I had only been married a few months. "I think,

Seymour," I murmured, "I will ring for someone to come." I did so, and amidst the din and the uproar the door opened and a very fat stewardess was hurled at us. We didn't realize at the time that she didn't understand English, and when in answer to my inquiry, "Is there any danger?" she replied, "Yes, plentys," and left hurriedly, my thoughts can well be imagined for the next few hours. Our cabin was on the deck, so that all that was coming to the ship came straight at us.

New York in 1904 was, of course, nothing like so noisy as it is to-day, but after London it was quite noisy enough. Then Fourteenth Street was up town, and Twenty-third Street the centre of the fashionable shops, and here, I think, too, Delmonico's Restaurant (which was what our "Berkeley" is to-day) was also situated. Daly's Theatre, as the heart of theatre-land and the last word in smartness, was also near by. To-day it is sad to see it has become a picture house.

Cinderella tripped on at Abbey's Theatre and was a great success, though the run was not a long one. The house was called after Mr. Abbey, the famous impresario, whose firm of Abbey, Schoeffel and Grau were at this period responsible for the introduction of Grand Opera to New York. Some wit christened the three partners Shabby, Shuffle and Growl. I don't know why. They were all three extremely nice men, I thought.

I found the American children curiously sophisticated after the London ones, but they softened their hearts and sent poor Cinderella packets of

acid drops, dollar bills, and one even sent me a beautiful curl from its own head. I have it still.

In London the children, moved to tears at seeing me left alone in the kitchen while my sisters went to the ball, used to send me pennies. One little boy fell in love with me from the front of the house and persuaded his mother to bring him round to see me. "There, darling," she said, "shake hands with Mrs. Hicks." The little boy burst out crying and said, "Oh, mother! not *HICKS!!!*"

It was on arrival in New York that we had the never-to-be-forgotten pleasure of meeting for the first time Richard Harding Davis, the famous American author, who remained one of our closest and most affectionate friends until the day of his lamented death during the War. I loved him very much. If ever there was a great gentleman it was Dick Davis. His chivalry towards women was perfectly wonderful. He was kindness and generosity itself, and was as a man a great example to all men. His industry was as immense as his vitality, and the work he left behind him is a joy to read in its powerful descriptiveness, its ease, its freshness, and its charm.

He was an American first, last and all the time, but he could always see the other nation's point of view, and I have heard many an American regret that he is not alive to-day, for he was *the* man to have spoken out candidly and wisely on many a little misunderstanding that has arisen at times between his country and mine.

Dear Dick, who no man ever heard use even the mildest of swear words, I often think of you and

would give much to see your kindly honest face and great big burly figure coming down the highway to greet me once again. It was Dick, though, who in trying to help us to be topical in New York nearly got us into trouble on the night of our first performance. Seymour had to say as the ugly sister in the last scene of the pantomime, " Oh, well, as the slipper won't fit me and I've lost the Prince, I shall have to marry a millionaire," and he asked Dick to tell him the name of a popular American Crœsus. Dick said, " Why, Gould, of course. Howard Gould—that will be sure to get you a laugh. Say 'How would Gould do?'" Well, quite innocently the line was spoken, and to our astonishment one section of the audience resented it.

The papers next morning also said it was a pity that foreign artists should indulge in personalities about people who did not belong to their own country, and on reflection we saw how right they were. However, we were only twenty-three then, and Dick Davis being full of youthful high spirits, without thinking, got us into this little bit of trouble.

We went everywhere with our new friend, and were taken to the night haunts of the Bowery and the coloured quarter Harlem Way. We went to the Dime Museums and saw everything. One Sunday night, I remember, he took us to a concert the principal feature of which was a grand selection of old negro songs and all kinds of Southern music. Seated next us at the end of our row was a long-haired man, who, after listening to the orchestra intently, suddenly buried his face in his hands and

moaned loudly. The manager of the hall, who was standing near by, thinking to be kindly, leant over to him and said sympathetically, "Ah! sir, I see you are a Southerner." The man looked up at him with wild eyes and said, "Gosh, no, I'm a musician."

It was during one of our outings at the theatre with Dick that we saw seated in a box opposite us that enormously popular actor, Nat Goodwin. During the evening a performer who was giving imitations of well-known celebrities suddenly spied Mr. Goodwin, and turning to the audience said: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have among us to-night one of America's greatest actors, Mr. Nat Goodwin. I will endeavour to give you an imitation of him." The house cheered, and the imitation being over, the mimic looked up at Mr. Goodwin's box and said, "Well, Nat, how's that?" Without a moment's hesitation, Mr. Goodwin answered, "Well, old man, one of us is rotten!"

It was while we were in New York that *Hansel and Gretel* was given for the first time by Augustin Daly, who had secured the opera from Sir Augustus Harris, or produced it in conjunction with him, I don't remember which.

We were present at the first performance to support Sir Augustus, who had arrived from England to cast a benevolent eye on the undertaking. Whether Augustin Daly was a little annoyed at his coming, or whether Druryolanus had been looming rather too largely in the Press, I don't know, but at the end of the evening Mr. Daly, in response to calls for him, came in front of the curtain

looking very untidy, his hair being ruffled and the collar of an old tweed coat turned up, which made it appear as if he had been working like a horse all night.

This was an excellent little bit of production, and, as the cheering looked like continuing indefinitely, he went to the side and led on Sir Augustus by the hand. The contrast between them was marked to a degree, for the Englishman being arrayed in a magnificent dress suit with a wide expanse of shirt front, an Inverness cape, to which were added a top hat and gold-headed cane and a large gardenia, he stood looking like a typically splendid picture of the idle rich.

If Mr. Daly meant to convey this impression, which the knowing ones in the house were sure he did, and indeed some of the papers next morning said in a jocular way was his intention, then he must have indeed been delighted, for his presentation of the immaculate English manager was received with hardly concealed laughter by the whole house.

I felt very uncomfortable, as it isn't at all pleasant to see a fellow-countryman being made to appear ridiculous. There were cries for a speech, and Sir Augustus, looking a little, shall we say, Britishly at the house, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, Humperdinck was a musician——" and paused; it was only for a moment, but I have never heard such a yell of derisive laughter in my life. Poor man, he was about to say that "Humperdinck was a musician so well known all over the world," etc., etc., but the fatal pause gave a not too sympathetically inclined audience the opportunity of

thinking he was trying to instruct his grandmother, and they would have no more of him. He went on speaking, but all he said was drowned in noise and laughter, and he had to leave the stage having only announced to an American audience, who were most knowledgable lovers of music, that "*Humperdinck was a musician.*"

While we were in New York there was a sale of the brilliant Miss Rosina Vokes' household effects, she having but recently died, and I went to the auction room, bidding successfully for a complete dinner service of very pretty design. Having nowhere to put it I had it set out in the sitting-room of our hotel.

Every day it grew smaller and beautifully less. Someone evidently admired it as much as I had. It would have been almost amusing if it hadn't been annoying to see plate after plate disappear. At last the soup tureen went, and towards the end of our visit there was little left but some sauceboats and a few odd pieces. These I gave to my coloured maid, who proudly informed me that she had put them in a cabinet in her dining-room. I often wonder if I ought to have said: "What, with the rest of the set?"

We made many real friends in America, and I left it full of regrets. On our arrival in London there was little time for anything but hard work, as rehearsals at the Gaiety started at once.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST OF "THE GIRLS"

THE new play by an American author, H. J. W. Dam, called *The Shop Girl*, not being ready, and as it was then the month of August, a very bad theatrical season, Mr. Edwardes decided to revive the old Gaiety burlesque of *Little Jack Sheppard*. It failed dismally. Personally, I only had a silly little part in it, so was not to be blamed. The reasons for the disaster were obvious and many. First of all, the book was of the old rhyming couplet-pun-joke-variety, which had even then been dead for several years. And when early in the evening lines such as

> "You are a villain; I know you well, of course;
> A Rowland Trenchard gathers no remorse,"

were spoken, the gallery became irritated, and we all knew what we were in for, as the whole piece teemed with this out-of-date, old-fashioned humour. Then, again, what made the entire night like a subscription dance in a cemetery, was the fact that Fred Leslie and David James, both being dead, and that very lamp of burlesque, Nellie Farren, a

hopeless cripple, all their friends who remembered their inimitable performances in the original production some ten years previously, came round between the acts to offer congratulations with streaming eyes and sobbed out: "Ah! dear old Fred!" "And I remember, too, what James did so clearly." "And Nellie, who will ever forget her?" "Oh, how wonderful they all were," and so on, and so on, and so on.

It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine how little chance there was for the revival under these conditions. The piece ran for six weeks to poor houses, and then rehearsals for *The Shop Girl* commenced, which was the beginning of a new regime at the Gaiety.

I mean new regime from the point of view that Mr. Edwardes had infused new blood into the famous old house, new authors, new composers, new artists, and practically a new form of entertainment.

If my memory serves me rightly, Willie Warde, Edmund Payne, and dear little Katie Seymour of the twinkling feet, were the only members of the old company who remained.

The autumn of 1904 at the Gaiety was memorable in that Ivan Caryll, whose real name was Tilkins, made his first appearance in its orchestral chair. His opera burlesque of *Little Christopher Columbus* had just been enormously successful at the Lyric, and had placed him in a very different position from the one he had occupied as an obscure pianoforte teacher not so very long before. His music had become the rage of London, and my old and

dear friend, Mr. William Boosey, fathered him at Chappell's.

Although he was a Belgian Tilkins, he need only have had to put "itch" at the end of Ivan and he would well have passed for a Russian nobleman. Felix, as he was known to all his intimates, had a wonderful manner. He used to drive up to the stage door in a pair-horse Victoria with two men on the box. Beneath his sable coat his clothes were the last word in cut and quality. His jewellery, although in the best of taste, was, however, quite noticeable, and many a jangling golden trinket had he attached to the various chains of the same precious metal which hung about him. It must not be inferred from this that he was just a dandy. He was, as a matter of fact, a very powerful little man, and vital to the last degree, and in the orchestra, for musical comedy or light opera, a giant. He always had his chair placed close up to the footlights and followed a singer or a dancer like a lynx. This method of sitting forward was particularly effective, for when conducting a big concerted movement or a finale, he used to swing his body right round and apparently physically sweep his strings and his brass into the big passages.

He was a great showman and knew the value of everything, from insisting on the fiddlers tapping their violins when he made his first appearance to conduct the overture, to the brushing feverishly of his parted Russian beard after he had flung down his baton presumably exhausted at the end of a successful number.

He and I were very great friends, and he used to

call me "Little Ellar," and always spoke of his songs as "may muscik." He spoke perfect English with only a few minor pleasant defects. Anyone more lavish in his generosity or princely in his mode of living I have never met. He had not the slightest idea of the value of money. I think if his income had been two thousand pounds a week he would have spent three, and most of it would have been devoted to giving pleasure to others.

To him Mr. Edwardes gave two-thirds of the scores to write, and to that master of light music, Lionel Monckton, the residue, i.e., about eight numbers, and the jealousy and manœuvring that used to go on between these two to secure the lyrical plums was wonderful to watch, Monckton trying to write all the best sellers, such as my songs and the numbers Seymour and I sang together, and of course Edmund Payne's, and Caryll always doing his best to try and foist concerted numbers upon him which he knew would be no good outside the theatre.

But Lionel Monckton was very shrewd and had the advantage of not only being a wonderfully expert and melodious writer who understood the public taste backwards, but wrote nearly all his own lyrics (at any rate in the rough) and supplied most of the ideas for his songs.

Caryll was marvellous at big waltzes, large finales, and the backbone and more noisy parts of the entertainment. They were an ideal combination, but no ambassadorial conference ever knew such intrigue as took place during production time at the old Gaiety.

The truth was they both were masters in their own particular line, and Mr. Edwardes saw that whatever he promised them they never got unless it was the one thing in which he knew them to be at their best.

Of course, when interpolated songs by outsiders were introduced into the plays from America or elsewhere, then, and then only, did Felix and Lionel join forces to attack Mr. Edwardes. But the latter always got his way, and the result was triumph after triumph for all three.

Caryll wrote his music on the moment. He was all temperament. Monckton corrected and corrected his compositions, and more often than not I have known him set a lyric for me half a dozen times before he was satisfied. But when he was satisfied (although he never pretended to be) you might be sure you were going to sing something the public would be humming for months. I sang nearly all his first big successes, "A little bit of string," "When the little pigs begin to fly," "The boy guessed right the very first time," and a dozen others.

He was taciturn by nature and never went out of his way to make himself popular with people. Indeed, his manner was more often the reverse, but to me he was always genial and kindly, and I had every reason to be very grateful to him, which indeed I was.

It was he who gave me the nickname of "The Rock of Gibraltar," this being because on a first night I was apparently quite calm and collected. My exterior may have given this impression, but

what went on inside no one will ever know. I used to be terrified.

It was at this time that a brilliant young undergraduate came to London from Oxford. His name was Paul Rubens, and I sang his first two numbers at the Gaiety in the second edition of *The Shop Girl*. One was called "The Little Chinchilla" and the other "The China Egg." With the most charming manners, a more delightful man never stepped. He remained quite unspoiled even when success was showered on him. He was always very delicate, and his death, which occurred at an early age, left a blank in the musical comedy world which has never been filled.

That Encyclopædia Britannica, Mr. Ropes, who, under the name of Adrian Ross wrote all the lyrics for Mr. Edwardes' productions, and splendid they were, was always handing me encore verses of a topical nature. I cared as little for politics in those days as I do now, and understanding nothing about them I used to sing quite innocently lines on the most controversial subjects and generally, I believe, looked the most surprised individual in the world when I heard boos or cheers as the case might be when I had quite smilingly informed the audience that Mr. So and So was either an asset to the country or the reverse.

Looking back at those early days at the Gaiety, what a team Mr. Edwardes had to drive. All the comedians in the theatre were generally at loggerheads, and there were so many well-known people in the company that the struggle for the best scenes that fell from the authors' table was fierce

in the extreme, but Mr. Edwardes managed them like the diplomatic genius he was. They all went into his office to get something more, and generally came out with something less, but they never knew it. George Edwardes was the only man I have ever met who could convince you without a doubt that black was white.

It was Lionel Monckton, who knew his every move, that christened him "Blue-eyed George." A wonderful description, because if anyone ever really cornered him he used to open his eyes with the bland innocence of a new-born baby, and was apparently so surprised about everything he was told that it almost seemed a shame to believe he ought ever to have been blamed for anything.

It is an amazing fact that George Edwardes had no ear for music whatever, and couldn't have hummed a tune correctly if he had been given a thousand pounds. He had a great flair, however, oddly enough, for what the public wanted in music, but being clever enough to know his weakness, relied on dear Walter Pallant for any final decision on a melody, a finer judge of a song than whom never lived. He was a stockbroker by profession, and was not only a director of the Gaiety but was the moving spirit in construction at production time of all the Gaiety pieces.

When *The Greek Slave* was produced at Daly's, which was an ambitious and charming work by Sidney Jones, Walter Pallant had his doubts, which were ultimately justified, about its financial success, and after the first night, when Sidney Jones asked him how he liked the music, said: "It's splendid,

Sidney, but you have forgotten the tunes." The march at the end of Act I, " Hail, Antonia, Hail ! " however, had a great melody, and was as good as anything in this class of work ever written, either before or since, at least that is what I always thought.

In mentioning the squabbles that took place for supremacy among the company at the old Gaiety I may say that personally I never found myself in disagreement with anyone. I used to play my own sort of parts and went on my own little way quietly. As a matter of fact I have never had a cross word with a soul in any theatre in my life. I am not sure that this can be said of my other half, I won't say worser, for Seymour in those days was well to the forefront in many a battle, and it was through my keeping him in order and smoothing things over that the name of " The Little Oil-can " was given to me.

That my time at the Gaiety was never anything else but very happy I must not forget to say was in a large degree due to the fact that I was very much spoiled by everyone there and never had anything but the greatest kindness shown me from Mr. Edwardes to the stage hands.

I am not altogether sure, however, that some of the older actors in the company looked upon some of the young male new-comers with a kindly eye. Arthur Williams, for instance, who was in reality a very good-natured man, was so essentially of the old school that he especially resented the presence of any actor or actress who had reached London before the age of forty, and who had not been well

through the mill, and he christened all the young people in the theatre " The Mellin's Food Brigade." This was the condemnation he felt was our due for being successful too early in life. He, however, soon got accustomed to the new order of things, though I don't think he ever became quite reconciled.

Of course I didn't bother him, but Seymour, dear Lionel Mackinder, Robert Nainby, and the then George Grossmith, Junior, were to him like red rags to a bull. On the second night of *The Shop Girl* he turned to Seymour and said, apropos of nothing, as if it were part of the text, " You think yourself a very clever young fellow, don't you ? " to which Seymour replied, " Yes, Polonius, I do," which got a big laugh, and he never said anything of the kind again.

Edmund Payne, who was the drollest of low comedians, never hit it off with Arthur Williams, and, if ever they met in a scene, at the best there was never anything but armed neutrality.

Teddy Payne used to get roars of laughter with his face, and Arthur Williams christened him " The Magic Lantern Slide Comedian." But I suppose all these little sparring matches have gone on among comedians since the days of Garrick and Cibber, so my comrades were only keeping up stage traditions, which is what they may have thought was quite the proper thing to do.

My dressing-room at the Gaiety was historic. Before I used it, it was Mr. Edwardes' office, and was given to me when he went across to a set of new premises on the other side of Wellington Street next to the Lyceum Theatre. But in the

days before the old Gaiety Theatre was built as I knew it, this very room was one in which Charles Dickens wrote.

When the theatre was pulled down to become part of the palatial *Morning Post* building, the contractors sent me a brick from the top of its mantelpiece. I had it set in silver, for I felt sure the great editor of *Household Words* must have often leaned upon it. Another charming thought was that of the old carpenter at the Gaiety who, when the theatre was being demolished, had the boards of the stage immediately in front of the conductor's desk made into a cabinet and sent it to me as a present. I often look at it, and what memories and thoughts of marvellous days and nights the marks and scratches on it conjure up.

They are the very pieces of wood on which, amongst others, Madame Vestris and the great Charles Mathews stood. They had felt the tapping of Kate Vaughan's dainty feet, and they could tell of Teddy Royce's antics. They had listened to Fred Leslie and E. J. Lonnen, and had creaked with applause at Nellie Farren. They had heard vast audiences shout their approbation hundreds of times. Gertie Millar had danced upon them, and Katie Seymour and Letty Lind. They had supported Edward Terry and Edmund Payne. Dear old Johnny Toole and Paul Bedford had trod them. Henry Irving had delivered his address from them on the last night of the old Gaiety surrounded by all the stars in London. I myself have sung many a success upon them, and my old

man has done so too. They must have known his song, "Her golden hair was hanging down her back," by heart. These sentinels of a great past weave dreams of never-to-be-forgotten times, for have they not listened to Regane's Sans Gêne and Coquelin's Cyrano?

And to look at all the dents upon them brings tears to my eyes and laughter to my lips, for a thousand ghosts of departed giants pass on in endless procession, many of whom were personal friends, men and women who have made history in the theatre. Sometimes they make my heart cry out, "Oh, for Yesterday! Give me back Yesterday—and all the wonderful comrades who were of it—if only for a few hours." But these sad thoughts are not to be encouraged, and so I just pat the little cabinet affectionately and happily think of other boards on which dance the equally clever people of To-day.

I have never been a bit of a prude, I hope, and am as broad-minded as it is possible to be, but somehow there was an idea in the theatre that because I was of a quiet and rather retiring disposition anything like even a mild swear word let slip would greatly offend me. I am bound to say there is nothing I like less than bad language of any kind, but I have never been so stupid as to look shocked if I heard it, for I know that the theatre is a nervy place when people are working hard. However, many people thought that "I's" should be dotted if Ella Terriss was about, and I discovered that even when I wasn't anywhere near if someone was inclined to embroider the King's English the standing joke

was for one of the men present to turn round and say, "Ah! good evening, Miss Terriss," as if I had just put in an appearance.

This little bit of fun continued among many of those who knew me well long after I had left the Gaiety, and if anyone went too far someone was sure to look up suddenly and say, "Good evening, Miss Terriss," which always got a laugh and generally stopped the gentleman who had lost his temper badly from giving too accurate an imitation of a bargee.

I would not like it to be thought for a moment that bad language is a habit of the theatre more than in any other walk of life, for actors are an extremely careful class of men in front of their women comrades. And as I look back on the very large number of people I have met in my life of all sorts and kinds, the people of whom I have been most fond are the men with whom I have earned my living, for they are, as a whole, kind-hearted, helpful and generous to a degree.

During the early rehearsals of *The Shop Girl* came my first disappointment. We had hardly started them when I was taken rather seriously ill, and I was ordered a complete rest. I had to give up my part, which was played by Miss Ada Reeve, and I was unable to go into the bill until the piece, which was a tremendous success, had been running for some time.

During my illness I had a very new invention, "The Electrophone," fitted up in my bedroom, and Ivan Caryll used to lean over his receiver in the orchestra and during the noisiest musical

numbers ask me how I was and tell me little bits of news. It cheered me up a lot.

When I returned to the Gaiety and opened in *The Shop Girl* I sang Mr. Leslie Stuart's first great London success, "Lousiana Lou," also an American song called "I want yer, ma honey," both of which found their way into the villages of England. It was in this play that Seymour sang "Her golden hair was hanging down her back," which ranked as a success of the century with "Two lovely black eyes" and "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay," and between us we had the good luck to have six of the big successful numbers in the play.

It seems funny to look back at the salaries in my young days at the Gaiety and compare them with those of a similar class of entertainment to-day.

This theatre, which was the premier musical comedy house in the land, never cost more than £1,300 a week to run. No fees were paid to the authors on the gross receipts; they each received a fixed sum of £20 a week, while the remuneration of the musical composers was on only a slightly larger scale.

As leading lady at the Gaiety I never received more than £35 a week, and Seymour never more than £25 as leading light comedian. The highest salary was Edmund Payne's £40. Arthur Williams got £30, Harry Monkhouse £25, Katie Seymour £25, and so on downwards. No wonder the plays in those days were able to run eighteen months or two years.

It was with the advent of the new form of entertainment devised by Mr. Edwardes of *The Shop Girl* type, that is to say, musical plays in modern dress instead of burlesque costumes, which up to this time had been the vogue, that a new brand of show girl arrived.

The handsome ladies of the old Gaiety burlesques, who were the idols of the crutch-and-toothpick brigade, as the stage *jeunesse doré* were called in those times, and who, from all accounts, seemed to have spent their entire leisure waiting with bouquets for the objects of their affection, were tall, beautiful creatures, generally in tights, with an odd diamond butterfly or two pinned on their shapely legs and sometimes in other most ridiculous places. These ladies were not called upon to do anything except to look lovely, which they undoubtedly did, they neither sang nor danced much, and from what I remember of them their time on the stage was usually taken up either looking at the stalls with a charmingly detached air, or watching the artists on it with either disdain or total indifference. In fact one almost felt that if a comedian could only earn their forgiveness for his endeavours he had indeed achieved a triumph.

But *The Shop Girl* Beauty Brigade, although just as handsome in appearance, were no longer allowed to be part of the scenery. They sang and danced, and, in fact, worked quite hard throughout the evening, and were often given small parts, which was an extremely good thing, not only for themselves, but for the good of the performance itself. It helped them to become individuals, and many of

them, having parts to understudy, not only got a chance to succeed, but took it.

It may surprise many to know that Miss Constance Collier was one of the original beauty ladies in *The Shop Girl*, and very lovely she was, and is. I remember in a fortune-telling scene, which Seymour had with all the most attractive ladies in London, that it was Miss Collier, who, on giving him her hand for him to read, showed such a lovely arm with it that he used it as a razor strop, and said: "Shave or haircut?" a remark at which the house roared.

I'm not sure this would get a laugh to-day, but one mustn't forget the stage caters for its contemporaries, and that in twenty years' time the jokes of 1928 will sound as old-fashioned as the puns of Burnand and Byron did to audiences of the early 'nineties. So please don't look with too critical an eye on the written gag of the past, or you yourself may be punished by your grandchildren, who will throw up their hands when they hear that one of the songs of your time was "Let's all go down the Strand—have a banana." Brilliant, maybe—but brainy—well!

I remember one evening during the performance, one of the show ladies, who was, I think, more ambitious to be thought good-looking than to become a Sarah Bernhardt, had the misfortune to break a beautiful string of pearls which adorned her neck. The precious baubles pattered over the stage and everyone looked aghast, but all she said was, "Good heavens! I've dropped my beads."

There are no such beings as show ladies to-day in

the sense we used to know them, all marvellous-looking, tall women with well-developed figures. Their place has been taken by an exactly opposite type, *petite*, pretty young people who it is a delight to watch, and who in their own way can well stand comparison with their predecessors.

It is really remarkable to watch a modern beauty chorus. Nearly all of them are expert dancers, and the ready way during an evening's entertainment most of them are able to play a character and even sing a little song makes one marvel. So good are they and so pretty to look upon that sometimes one is not conscious of the absence from the stage of the stars, which is saying something for these hard-working and lively young people.

I was devoted to all the small-part ladies I worked with, and I think I may say they were very fond of me. Many of them married extremely well, as they deserved to, and the only grudge I have against them is that their charming daughters do not put the clock back for me. No, I don't think I ought to have said that—Age makes no difference if you're happy, and I am as happy to-day as I have ever been in my life.

Among the favourites at the Gaiety at this time was Miss Rosie Boote. She was a divine dancer and was so graceful that she was christened by her friends "The Reed." She left the stage to become the Marchioness of Headfort, and what was a loss to the theatre was a gain to society.

Miss Fanny Warde played a tiny part at the Gaiety before making a success in *A Night Out* at the Vaudeville, and a prettier little lady one

couldn't conceive possible. When to-day she informs us she is sixty-one, all I can say is that I think she is laughing up her sleeve.

I was present in a box a few years ago at the new Gaiety when *The Shop Girl* was revived. It was a very strange feeling to see the old piece in new clothes. The only member of the original cast was Bobby Nainby, who was as good as ever. Sir Alfred Butt's reproduction, for which Seymour was responsible, was on a much more lavish scale than the one I played in, and I enjoyed it enormously. Many of the old song successes were missing, but the ones which took their place were very good. Poor Alfred Lester was divine on totally different lines to Edmund Payne, and Evelyn Laye was delightful. At the end of the play the audience recognized me and insisted on my leaving my box and going on to the stage. They seemed very pleased when I kissed my successor, and I'm sure I did so with great admiration and pleasure, for Miss Laye deserves all the success that has come to her. Not only is she beautiful, but she has great talent and vivacity, and, better than all, she plays at the top of her form at every performance.

CHAPTER VII

GENIAL GILBERT AND GENTLE SULLIVAN

WHEN *The Shop Girl* had been running for well over a year, Mr. Edwardes asked me to leave the cast and come to the Lyric Theatre to create a part in a new comic opera by W. S. Gilbert, with music by Osmond Carr. As his word was a command, I readily agreed, and in fear and trembling was taken to be introduced to the King of Humorists.

I had always understood that he was a very frightening person, and expected to be eaten up. But to my surprise I met one of the most kindly of men. The first thing I found out was that I was a cousin of his by marriage, a little distant perhaps, but a cousin, and we hadn't been rehearsing many days before he christened me "The Tuneful Nine." The joke was a little involved, but I can explain it in this way. My name being Hicks he made it IX. IX is nine, and as I was a singer of sorts I became "The Tuneful Nine."

I am glad the great man thought I was melodious, otherwise he might have said of me what he said of Rutland Barrington on a first night when someone

in his box turned to him and remarked, "Isn't Barrington excellent. He's singing in tune." "Don't worry about that," said Mr. Gilbert, "it's only first-night nervousness."

I should have been extremely sorry for anyone who fell foul of W. S. Gilbert, but at rehearsal, if he saw that people were trying their best, he was patience and consideration itself.

He was a great stage manager, and could show you what he meant by acting a scene for you. Sometimes having to impersonate a girl's part, being six feet four in height and big in proportion, he seemed funny, but he wasn't really, for he conveyed even to the ladies the exact way his dialogue should be spoken.

He was never popular with men. I don't think he troubled himself whether he was or not. In his own house, when dinner was over, he never lingered long over the wine and cigars, his habit being to join the ladies as quickly as possible. It may be from this peculiarity of his that Sir James Barrie found the title for his famous one-act play, probably it wasn't.

I soon found out that there was no dissembling about Mr. Gilbert; what he thought he said, and it was a very stupid person who tried to cross swords with him. There is a story of a well-known actor who had been taken back and back again by him at rehearsal. At last he lost his temper and said, "Look here, Mr. Gilbert, I'm not the best tempered of men." "No," said Mr. Gilbert, "neither am I." "I stand six feet three in my stockinged feet," said the actor. "I stand six feet four," said

Gilbert. "And," said the actor, "I am a very strong man." "So am I," said the author of the "Bab Ballads," "but," he continued, "if you want to know the difference between us I'm an extremely clever man."

I wonder what he'd say if he knew that the Garrick Theatre, which he built and let to Sir John Hare at a rental of five thousand a year, was to-day being farmed out at a profit of five and twenty thousand pounds per annum. I should imagine his remarks would illuminate its entire front entrance.

It was during the excavations for the building of this house that the architect discovered running water. In consternation he wrote and informed Mr. Gilbert of the fact. When telling me the story Mr. Gilbert said, "It certainly seemed most disastrous, and for some time I was in grave doubt whether to continue building or let the fishing."

Seymour and I had the pleasure and good fortune on many occasions of being the guests of Lady Gilbert and Sir William at their country place, Grimsdyke, near Pinner, and it was a delight to listen to him, and I am sure a greater delight for him to be listened to. At table he was not so much a conversationalist who caught the ball and passed it on, as a teller of witty stories connected with himself. He was no respecter of persons if they had incurred his displeasure, and before he received his knighthood he was particularly bitter in his remarks about the givers of these things.

I remember well him saying: "This indiscriminate flinging about of knighthoods is making me very

nervous. It's quite possible they may give one to my butler. He's a very good fellow and I am afraid it will upset him."

After this sally he turned to Seymour and said, "Hicks, do you believe in actors receiving knighthoods?" to which my partner answered, "Certainly, as long as they don't get them for acting!" "Quite so," replied our host. "That would put far too great a strain on the limited intelligence of the people in Government departments who are paid to pretend they know something about anything."

After *His Excellency* had been produced he gave me a beautiful Newfoundland dog. He told me its name was Guelph. "What a strange name," I said. "Why do you call him Guelph?" "Well," he replied, "whenever he barks he goes 'gowlph—gowlph.' It sounded like a royal bark so I called him Guelph."

It was during one of our frequent week-end visits to Grimsdyke that Mr. Gilbert, as he then was, read out at breakfast time the account of the Dreyfus Trial in Paris. When he had finished he turned to Seymour and said, "There's a plot for you. Why don't you lay the story in England and write a drama for your father-in-law?"

Seymour took the hint and did write the play for my father. It was called *One of the Best*, and ran for nearly two years at the Adelphi Theatre.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, who was a dramatic critic at the time, and naturally a most amusing one, didn't like the play and predicted a short run for it. In "Who's Who in the Theatre" it is classified

amongst the plays which have run longest, so you see even a great genius may sometimes be mistaken.

The title of this piece was found in a very strange way. No one could hit on anything which seemed to fit it, but just before production, when it *had* to be called something, and no really good suggestion was forthcoming, a bookmaker friend of Mr. Edwardes wired him saying, "As Bill Terriss is the hero of the Adelphi play why not call it *One of the Best?*" And that's how it was christened.

Father made one of the melodramatic successes of his life in this piece, and the scene of his degradation in the Barrack Square drew all London. He was a dear, light-hearted angel, and knew no such word as delay about anything. For instance, during the run of this play, Seymour and I were dining with him after a matinée and he suddenly said to Seymour, "Old man, I see we are likely to go to war with France over Fashoda. Write me a speech about it—you know; what we shall do to the French if they don't behave themselves. British Lion stuff with a round of applause at the end." "When for?" said Seymour. "Now," said father. "I'll speak it to-night." He called to a waiter to get some paper, threw a pencil to Seymour and said "Go on." I said, "Father, you'll never learn it in time." "Oh, yes," he said, "I will. As you're not playing to-night come in and hear me." To the accompaniment of orders for fish and soup, and the clatter of plates, Seymour, with a fork in one hand and the pencil in the other, wrote a splendid piece of claptrap beginning: "One hundred years ago the

guns of Europe," etc., etc., etc., and ending up with something to this effect : " Britain feared no Frenchman then—she fears no Frenchman now ! " Father said " That's it—the very thing," and began to memorize it with the aid of a plate of strawberries. I felt sure he'd never learn it, and told him so. It was a very long speech, but he only laughed and said, " It will be quite all right." We went to the Adelphi and sat in a box in fear and trembling. When he made his first entrance in Act II. the actor in the scene with him gave him the lead up to the interpolation, and he started with all the assurance in the world. The house listened riveted. At the fourth line he forgot every word Seymour had written, but he never hesitated for one moment. What he talked about no one knew, I'm sure, and they didn't care, for there stood their Bill Terriss, looking marvellously handsome in a kilt, and as his passion rose to its height, the balderdash he was speaking being embroidered with " Queen Victoria," " England—our England ! " and finishing with the lines, " We fear no Frenchman now," the audience cheered themselves hoarse. He turned up the stage and winked gaily at me. He was a marvellous personality, and it was truly said of him that he could have got a round of applause if he had recited the alphabet.

Mr. Edwardes' name was announced as part-author of the piece, but he knew nothing about it until it was read to him. He very sportingly, however, put his name to it, so that when Seymour took it to the Messrs. Gatti, it would carry more weight,

and I'm sure his being one of its supposed godfathers helped Seymour with father's old friends. He refused to take any of the author's fees, though, as some managers would have done. But then, Mr. Edwardes was a big man and delighted in doing generous things.

His Excellency was a success, but not a great one, and ended just about the same time as *The Shop Girl*. An offer coming from America to have it transplanted to New York, and a similar offer having come about *The Shop Girl* also, negotiations were entered into and both pieces were sent across the Atlantic, Seymour and I sailing on the same boat to open simultaneously at different theatres.

Both plays failed. *The Shop Girl* principally because most of the funny lines had originally come from America, and also several of its most successful numbers, and *His Excellency* being a very fantastic Gilbertian story, and not having Sullivan's music wedded to it, fell flat; so flat indeed that the American manager, Al Hayman, was in despair and determined to try and bolster it up at whatever cost by interpolating anything in or out of the picture to try and make it go.

I was given a song of dear Letty Lind's to sing called "Umpty Umpty Ay," for which I got seven encores, and between the acts John Le Hay, who was playing a costume comedy part in the opera, used to change into dress clothes and do his famous ventriloquial entertainment with a dummy whose stock joke was "rotten cotton gloves," returning in the second act to continue his part.

Mr. Gilbert never heard of this. If he had, I

think he would have chartered a steamer to come over and kill somebody.

However, all these attempts to turn the tide of fortune did not succeed, and so both companies packed up and returned to their native shores.

Of *The Shop Girl*, Allan Dale, a vitriolic New York critic, wrote: "America may be going to war with England over Venezuela, but why send us *The Shop Girl?*"

Before leaving England, Mr. Beerbohm Tree asked Mr. Edwardes to release me to go to His Majesty's and play the leading part with him in a new piece by Henry Arthur Jones called *Carnac Sahib*. To this Mr. Edwardes couldn't see his way to agree. I should very much like to have played with Mr. Tree, but as the production he made only ran for about ten nights everything turned out for the best.

It was during this visit to New York that Seymour and myself had our first quarrel. It all came about through my trying to persuade him not to be quite so extravagant. He wasn't at all tractable, and when the argument was at its height I began to cry. This seemed too much for him, so he bounded out of the room and left me miserable. When he returned a quarter of an hour later he kissed me and gave me a ring for which he had paid four hundred dollars.

As this was our total capital at the time, and our squabble had been on a question of finance, I saw that I had completely failed.

Perhaps it is for this reason that we have made a speciality of never disagreeing about anything

Photo : Foulsham.

As Peggy Quainton in "The Gay Gordons," at the Aldwych Theatre

through all the long years. No, I won't say that; I know how to manage him, that is the real reason. He is an excitable creature with a big generous heart, but he doesn't know what I know, and that is that if he is inclined to be a little difficult I have only got to look the slightest degree worried and he's ready to climb to the top of St. Paul's at once if he thinks it would please me. I mustn't let him know this, though, or he will want to stop climbing anywhere.

I'm afraid that to-day he isn't any more thrifty than he was in 1904; still, I wouldn't have my old man anything other than he is, has been, and always will be to me.

Our return voyage was an eventful one. At midnight, when we had only left New York about twelve hours, we came into collision with a big steamer bound for Baltimore. All our lifeboats on the port side were carried away, as luckily she hit us at an angle and not broadside on. She managed to struggle to Baltimore and sank in the harbour. We, being struck above the water line, were in no danger, though for some hours the water rising in the hold and the main saloon being flooded, made the experience a terrifying one. As is usual on these occasions, many unconsciously funny things occurred. One passenger who knew nothing of the danger we had been in rang his bell and indignantly told the steward that water was coming into his cabin. Two maiden ladies, when informed that we might have to take to the boats, took out a spirit lamp and began to curl their fringes. Some wag said they were trying to put on a bold front; while an English Guards

officer during a lull in the panic calmly rolled a cigarette, and, speaking more to himself than to the assembled company shivering in their night attire, said with a drawl, " Of course this is really very serious ! " I burst out laughing, and, without meaning to, restored the confidence of the ladies near me. At seven in the morning some forty passengers, I may say the only ones up, became very hungry, and one of them discovered a large cake in the main dining saloon. This he cut up and shared out as economically as he could among the women. At eight o'clock a steward who had slept through the whole disaster came among us and said, " Somebody has taken Mrs. Chichester's cake. I left it on the side." " I took it," said our good Samaritan ; " what about it ? " " What about it ? " said the steward. " She left it with me and I shall be blamed." " Don't you worry about that," said our friend. " It's lucky it isn't sop by this time."

I've travelled all over the world, but I hate the sea as much as I admire the brave men who live on it and are ready at all times to risk their lives for the people in their care.

The piece that followed *The Shop Girl* was called *My Girl.* It did not succeed. It was not of the real Gaiety type. It lacked comedy and the music was poor. Seymour threw his part up ; I am bound to say it wasn't a good one, but by doing so it cost him seven months' salary, which was by no means even high finance.

It was in this play that an American song called " The New Bully " was given to Miss Connie Ediss.

The lyric was altered, and it was called " When my husband is Sir Tom." His late Majesty, then Prince of Wales, came to the theatre one night and was seriously annoyed at one of its encore verses. Naturally, it was immediately cut out. The couplet which His Royal Highness thought in bad taste was :

> " I shall have horses with nice long tails
> When my papa is the Prince of Wales."

I remember well how the Prince on hearing the verse turned deliberately in his box and held an animated conversation with his guests. Everyone was much upset to think that we should have incurred even the momentary displeasure of our Great Patron.

And talking of patrons of the theatre, was there ever a greater one than dear Mr. Alfred de Rothschild ? Every night when in London he went somewhere. He often arrived very late, but the playhouse as a recreation was his first thought, and the innumerable kindnesses he did to members of my profession would fill a very large volume.

It was at his house on a Sunday evening that I first met Madame Patti, and the Queen of Song that night graciously sang for her Prince of Hosts. It was the only time I ever heard her. The song she chose was " Home, sweet home," and it was something to remember. She looked marvellously young, and her figure was quite girlish and slight, although she had long retired and must have been well on in years. She talked to me a great deal about father, of whom she was a great admirer, and who had on

more than one occasion been her guest at her castle, Craig-y-nos.

That night Adelina Patti insisted on my singing "I want yer, ma honey." The occasion was a great one and several Royal Personages were among the guests. This fact alone would have made me nervous, but to think that I had to sing not only before the great diva but after her, made me feel like a sparrow chirping in the early morning after the nightingale had retired to rest.

Mr. Alfred, the name by which we all affectionately knew him, had many charming ways of bestowing benefits on everyone he possibly could. For instance, every evening when he left home his butler presented him with ten new sovereigns on a salver. These were for his tips. The first person to get one was the policeman on duty at Seamore Place. The policeman at the private entrance of the theatre he was visiting was the next recipient of his bounty. The girl who handed him his programme was also always given a like amount, and throughout the night everyone who performed the smallest service for him was well rewarded.

I remember him once at Seamore Place amusing me very much after dinner. He said, "Do you know, I have the most honest servants in the world. Come here, my dear, and look!" He led me into the little room on the left of the hall and said, "Do you see those eight coppers on the mantelpiece? They have been there for years and no one has ever touched them. What do you think of that?"

Of course I agreed it was marvellous, but it was so childlike I couldn't help smiling. I don't mean

that all his servants were not the most faithful in the universe, but fancy supposing that anyone would move this trifling amount from the house of Rothschild knowing what pleasure it gave him to see them dusted daily.

Sometime after this we lunched with him in the City, and during the repast he said, "Now, Miss Ellaline, as you are in the City you must support the Stock Exchange and have a little flutter. I think I can advise you to buy some shares" (mentioning the name of a stock which I don't remember).

At the end of the meal his secretary entered. Mr. Alfred at once inquired whether my stock showed a profit or a loss. Very solemnly the secretary said, "Miss Terriss has made fifty pounds, sir," and I was handed a cheque for the amount. This was a gesture of which surely a King of France would have been proud. Expostulations were useless.

Mr. Alfred also took great pleasure in taking care of the savings of people in my calling. Amongst others, he used to look after Fred Leslie's affairs. Leslie, on one occasion, brought down £250 to the City to be invested. He gave a cheque for £220 and paid the rest of the amount, thirty sovereigns, to Mr. Edward Silverthorne, Mr. Alfred's confidential clerk. Mr. Rothschild, who was present, seeing this, said, "Put that loose money in your pocket, Leslie. We don't take coppers from actors."

These two little anecdotes may perhaps give some idea of what a generous and kindly gentleman Mr. Alfred was.

After the non-success of *My Girl*—it wasn't

exactly an absolute failure—the next piece the Gaiety management produced was *The Circus Girl*, an adaptation from the German by Walter Pallant and J. T. Tanner, with music of course by Caryll and Monckton. This proved another *Shop Girl* and ran for more than eighteen months. In this play I sang "A little bit of string." I had heard the song in a tiny music hall in New York. Lionel Monckton altered the lyric and wrote his famous melody. It took the town by storm.

It was while *The Circus Girl* was nightly jumping through her hoop so gaily that I received an urgent message one evening from Mrs. Langtry to say that she wanted Seymour and myself to come to supper that night at her house. Her note said that the party would be a small one, and that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales had signified his intention of being present. This threw me into a great state of excitement and I could think of nothing else all through the performance.

We arrived at Cadogan Place with all haste, and His Royal Highness was, as usual, kindness itself to me. I had had the honour of being presented to him on several previous occasions and he was good enough to remember me. At the end of supper the Prince turned to Seymour and offered him a cigar. Seymour took it in a rather embarrassed way, but did not light it. "Don't you smoke, Mr. Hicks?" asked our future King. "Yes, sir," said Seymour, "but might I be permitted to keep it?" The Prince looked at him severely and said "Certainly not," and then with a twinkle in his eye said "Have another."

This was over thirty years ago, and the royal cigar is still as good as ever, resting as it does in a glass-covered silver box in our drawing-room. I wouldn't part with it for all the jewels that the Bourbons didn't lose.

Later in the evening we went up to the drawing-room and H.R.H. very graciously honoured me by asking me to sing " A little bit of string " to him. I, of course, went straight to the piano, but to my surprise and fright the first gentleman in the land, or any other land for the matter of that, drew his chair up close to the keyboard.

I began quite merrily, but in the middle of the second verse completely broke down and for the life of me couldn't remember a word. Old Mr. Reuben Sassoon, who was present, and who had seen *The Circus Girl* many times, came to the rescue, gave me the line I wanted, and my confidence coming back I went on like a house on fire and sang all the encore verses as well. As the last notes of the piano died away the Prince was very much amused at my nervousness, and said he didn't understand how it was possible for me to forget something I had been singing only a couple of hours before to a crowded house.

If a fairy's wand could have made H.R.H. change places with me for two minutes he would without any difficulty have realized my feelings. To sit down with one's future sovereign at one's elbow is an experience which, though a very happy one, is, believe me, frightening in the extreme, especially when one remembers what a colossal personality his late Gracious Majesty possessed.

Our hostess that night, afterwards Lady de Bathe, had known Seymour all his life, as they were both natives of Jersey. She had always been as kind a friend to both of us as she was beautiful, which is appreciation enough, I hope.

Many are the happy times we had in days gone by in the beautiful little Island of which she was the loveliest Lily.

She was the most good-natured woman in the world, and even forgave Seymour for floundering into a most ridiculous *faux pas* at her table. We were dining at her house at Newmarket and someone, noticing that she was talking a great deal to him about people they had both met, said " Oh ! Mr. Hicks, you seem to have known our hostess a long time." " I should think I have," said Seymour gaily. " I'm proud to say she nursed me on her knee." There was a sudden silence, and Mrs. Langtry said " Really, Seymour, really ! " and in his endeavour to cover up his lack of chivalry he made matters worse by adding " Ah ! but how often have I returned the compliment." Laughter and the fish followed. Seymour's first remark was perfectly true, as his mother and beautiful aunt, Mrs. Warre, were Lily le Breton's friends and contemporaries when she was a girl.

We had not been at the Gaiety very long when Mr. Edwardes, who lived at Winkfield, near Ascot, persuaded us that the only place to live in was the country. He could have persuaded one to do anything, and so we forsook Sloane Street and took a house called " Chilston " not far from Mr. Edwardes' own place, a house with fourteen acres of land,

stabling for eight horses, altogether too large for us and one far beyond our means.

We kept four horses, and Seymour has since said that he had four cardboard heads of thoroughbreds made to look out of the other empty boxes and employed a boy to neigh at intervals. This is quite untrue, but it makes a funny story.

The gardens of the house were delightful and the nesting-place of every sort and kind of bird. We took great care, of course, that they were never disturbed during the breeding season, and my consternation can well be imagined one beautiful spring morning when my brother-in-law Stanley, then a schoolboy of fourteen, came gaily into the house with a bowler hat filled to the brim with every variety of birds' eggs. Words utterly failed me. All I could say was "You naughty boy! Go and put them all back again." The little chap left the house very ashamed of himself and came back afterwards to say he had done his best. That season thrushes hatched out wrens, blackbirds—swallows, and water-wagtails—sparrows. How ridiculous my remark had been only dawned upon me later. I fear there must have been many divorce cases in the bird kingdom that season.

We could only afford to furnish half the house, but nevertheless we had many happy times there, and during four successive Ascot meetings entertained all and sundry.

Never shall I forget one dinner party composed of such well-known *bon viveurs* as Archie Wortley, Algy Bastard, Charles Brookfield and several other of the most knowledgeable men about town. During

the meal the champagne ran short. Being very young, we didn't know what to do, but the situation was saved by Seymour leaving the table and sending the coachman down to the local public house to procure the best brand possible. The spoiler of horses returned in a twinkling with six bottles of champagne (?). Each bottle had a black label on it on which was engraved a bunch of grapes.

Heaven only knew what it was, and the maid, being as doubtful as we were, with great presence of mind wrapped a napkin round each and all of them and served it bravely. We expected disaster, but to our surprise not one of the men who drank it noticed anything. They had done themselves so extremely well early in the entertainment on Bollinger and Clicquot that they were palateless and enjoyed this 1928 Cruet Stand Brand as if it was a vintage of vintages. Hosts possessed of only a limited cellar, please note.

It was at one of the Ascot meetings that I had a real slice of bad luck. It was in the Gold Cup in which Victor Wild started a hot favourite in a field of only five. This celebrated horse looked a certainty and almost any odds were offered against the other runners. However, just before the race started, Walter Dickson, known to all London as Dicky the Driver, said to me, "Now, Ella, we'll have a bet. There's a horse in the race called Love Wisely. I think you and Seymour have done that. It's an omen, so I'll have a tenner on it. You're on half my winnings to nothing if it comes off. It's twenty-five to one."

Our coach was on the side of the course away from

the stands and the ring, so Seymour was sent away post-haste with ten pounds to back the outsider, and told to hurry as quickly as possible as there was only just time to get the money on.

I was naturally all excitement as I had been racing very seldom. I heard the shout of "They're off" and was very downcast as the horses flew past us to see Victor Wild, his jockey, in a black and white striped jacket, leading, and my animal last. The Gold Cup is a long race, as everybody knows, and I had given up any hope of winning a fortune, when all of a sudden a mighty shout went up; Victor Wild, who looked like winning anyhow, suddenly stopped and the other horses rushed on and left him far behind. The beautiful animal had broken down, and indeed never raced again.

The people all round us yelled, and when Love Wisely took the lead and won I think Walter Dickson and I nearly fell off the coach.

But the sequel was a tragedy.

Seymour, who had fought his way through the crowd between our coach and the rails, had been turned back by a policeman as he tried to cross the course to get to the ring, and being unable to return to us, was jammed among the people, who were yards deep, and didn't even see the race. Hot and dusty, he at last arrived and handed Walter Dickson his ten pounds back, explaining what had happened. When he was told that Love Wisely had won, which he didn't know, and that its price was twenty-five to one, his face was a study.

However, it wasn't his fault, and Walter Dickson, who was the most genial soul in the world, was only

upset that he hadn't been able to hand me my hundred and twenty-five sovereigns. It wasn't till after dinner that night that the gloom lifted and Dicky the Driver took the blame for having sent Seymour off at the last moment.

It was very aggravating, though, and we were chaffed unmercifully during the rest of the meeting. I think my young man was more worried than anyone, and to this day if anyone asks him to put money on for them at a race meeting, he always replies, "No, thank you. I tried to be obliging once before. You get someone else to do it."

The term of our tenancy at Ascot expired after three years, and as we were about to leave, to our dismay we discovered that we had taken on the unexpired three years of a twenty-one years' repairing lease, which called for the restoration of the house, the rebuilding of outhouses, the replanting of trees and no end of other things involving an outlay of many hundreds of pounds. As we had little or no capital, we found ourselves up against a blank wall.

We wrote to the firm of solicitors who had informed us of our obligations, and a little later we were called upon by Lord Esher's agent, Lord Esher, the then Master of the Rolls, being the owner of the property. At that time I had not met this grand old gentleman, who afterwards became our friend.

After a long talk with the agent, in which no doubt he became aware in the first five minutes that my husband and I knew as much about business as a child with a rattle, he left us saying that he

would send a list of the things we were liable to make good. A week elapsed, which was one of the longest weeks I ever remember, when one morning we received a letter from Lord Esher himself, which ran as follows :

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hicks,

"I am informed that you have taken over the fag-end of a twenty-one years' repairing lease of my property, Chilston. I can only conceive that the solicitor who allowed you to do such a thing is either a rogue or an arrant fool. In either case I feel that it would not be honest of me to take advantage of the inexperience of a young couple who work so hard for their money, and who give Lady Esher and myself so much pleasure in their acting. I therefore wish you to take this letter as a full indemnity against all and any conditions my lease may hold, and to understand that I will take over the estate myself from you and make the necessary arrangements for restoration."

The letter continued on other topics, and we learned from it for the first time that the old lady and gentleman who always sat in the front row of the stalls at the matinées were the big-hearted owners of the house in which we lived.

There is no need for me to enlarge on the wonderful generosity of this act ; the letter speaks for itself. We, of course, journeyed off at once to tender our grateful thanks, and our meeting over a business matter was the means of our being allowed to add our humble names to the long list of personal friends of those two distinguished people, The Master of the Rolls and Lady Esher.

Grateful beyond words to our late landlord, we moved into a house in Gloucester Terrace, Hyde

Park, with light hearts. Little did I think what a house of tragedy this was to become. They say that certain houses are unlucky. This one certainly was to us. For although professionally the skies were cloudless, privately everything conceivable went wrong, not, however, for the first few months, for we enjoyed ourselves there tremendously and had the happiest time imaginable. These were the days when the really smart thing to do was to ride a silver-plated push bicycle in the Park. It seems perfectly ridiculous to look back upon, but bicycling then was what motoring is now and perhaps what flying will be very soon. Money in London flowed like water. The African boom was at its height, and it is no exaggeration to say that often we had invitations to go to five different supper parties on the same night. I, however, seldom went out myself, and indeed have made a practice of never doing so. This, no doubt, sounds very early Victorian, but listening to meaningless chatter and a restaurant band has always seemed to me far harder work than working.

It was during the run of *The Circus Girl* that I first had the privilege of meeting Arthur Sullivan, the kindest and greatest darling of a man imaginable, as a character in *Juno and the Paycock* describes another. Simple and gentle, he radiated sunshine wherever he went.

To look at, he was quite different from the ordinary accepted type of musician, as much indeed as is his famous brother in Art, that great and unassuming gentleman, Sir Edward Elgar. But as real genius and simplicity are twins it is hardly to be wondered

at that both these mighty pillars of British music should be totally unlike the many gaudy little butterflies who lean Beethoven-like upon their jazz or Schubert-wise on their fox-trots.

One night Sir Arthur came to our Gaiety play, and after the performance visited me in my dressing-room. He had been delighted, he said, with everything, the fun, the charm and especially the music. There was no captious criticism from this master of melody. He was genuinely pleased, and, wonderful to relate, did me the honour to praise my humble efforts, adding that he hoped I should create a part in one of his next works. That night I felt as proud as a dog with two tails, or as an American once said to me, "as bright as a banana in a coal scuttle."

To have met this great man was enough, but to have deserved (I hope) his approbation was something to have worked for. Alas! he had not many years to live. He was in delicate health about this time and was more often than not in great pain, though whether suffering or not he was always sweetness itself to all those with whom he came in contact. Arthur Sullivan was without an enemy in the world, and so modest was he that once when asked by an admirer where he got all his wonderful melodies from, he put up his eyeglass and, pointing to the classic works on the bookshelves of his library, said very simply, "From those."

It was Sir Arthur Sullivan who at one of his big evenings in his Victoria Street flat presented me for the first time to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, a never-to-be-forgotten night for me, of course, not only on

account of this epoch-making event in my life, but because, during a little sketch I played that evening with Seymour my partner, in crossing from one side of the floor to the other (there being no stage), I had the misfortune to kick our future King by no means lightly on the shins. His Royal Highness most graciously made merry of the mishap afterwards, but at the time we both wished ourselves a thousand miles away.

As everyone, I suppose, knows, Sir Arthur Sullivan's manuscripts look like the most beautiful copperplate, and I am proud to be the possessor of the original copy of "Cook's Son," his setting of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's splendid verses, written by him at the time of the Boer War. What a daring thing it is for a minnow like I am to even whisper an appreciation of genius, but Mr. Kipling is my favourite author, and I am convinced that if every young man living were to commit his "If" to memory the world would be peopled with real gentlemen and we should hear no more of the post-war bad manners so prevalent to-day.

The manuscript I refer to was given to me after the great composer's death by my life-long friend, his nephew, Mr. Herbert Sullivan, who, in collaboration with Mr. Newman Flower, has written recently an absorbing life of his immortal uncle.

CHAPTER VIII

POUSSE-CAFÉ OF FRIENDS

IN mentioning the War in Africa I look back with pardonable pride to a matinée I organized at the Albert Hall with the late Mr. C. P. Little, in aid of the wives of disabled officers. The afternoon was a tremendous success. Ten thousand people paid for admission and I was able to give to the Military Funds the sum of five thousand pounds.

Apart from the object of the matinée, the entertainment itself was one of outstanding merit, for not only did every artist of note in London at that time take part in it, but, in addition, the massed Bands of the British Army, six hundred strong, played magnificently in aid of their comrades.

Two hundred of the prettiest actresses in the kingdom, dressed as hospital nurses, sold the programmes that afternoon and reaped a rich harvest, while, to crown everything, our late gracious Majesty and our present beloved King occupied the Royal Box, in which the Duke of Fife and the Princess Royal were members of a most distinguished party.

I had the honour of being sent for by His Royal

Highness during one of the intervals, and both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York each gave me a sovereign for a programme. The Prince, probably remembering Seymour and his Royal cigar, said with a smile, as he handed me his golden coin, "Mind, you mustn't keep that one, Miss Terriss." However, it was the only time I have been disloyal. I did keep the two identical pieces of money (of course substituting two others), and they are to-day set in diamonds to be treasured by me and mine for all time.

The performance finished with the audience of ten thousand singing "God Save the Queen," to the accompaniment of the massed bands, and as each member of this mighty gathering had been given a Union Jack when they entered the building, the effect of these thousands of our dear flags waving to the rhythm of England's National Hymn was magical. It was the truly moving moment of a great day.

It was on this afternoon that I had the honour of being presented for the first time to the Princess Royal, who, if I may with all respect be permitted to say so, has always been the greatest patron of the Drama. The affection my profession bears this great and gracious lady is unbounded, for they all know that it is not only the successes in the theatre which are patronized by Her Royal Highness. More often than not her visits are paid to many a not very brilliant entertainment which, struggling to keep its head above water, needs the help and encouragement which this Royal lady in the kindness of her heart is always so ready to give.

About this period there were two other benefits, the like of which will never be forgotten by those who witnessed them. They were the farewells to the stage of Nellie Farren, and of Ellen Terry, though the latter proved luckily only to be an *au revoir*. I appeared at both.

For the Nellie Farren performance the pit and gallery began to assemble at eight o'clock on the evening of the day before, sitting patiently on camp stools throughout the entire night. The doors opened at midday and the curtain rose at one o'clock. I had to begin the entertainment with Seymour in our little duologue *Papa's Wife*, and, oddly enough, the first line of the piece and the one I had to speak on my entrance was: "Goodness, you have kept me waiting a long time." The words were hardly out of my mouth when the house yelled, laughed and applauded, and for the moment I was completely taken aback until I realized how completely it expressed the feelings of the hundreds who had patiently kept an all-night vigil.

What a programme it was. Every star from Henry Irving downwards took part in it, and so many were the volunteers that the only way it was possible for everyone on the London stage to make an appearance was by devising a harlequinade. This met the case splendidly, the crowd being composed of nothing but leading actors and actresses, the biggest stars contenting themselves with a line apiece. For instance, Charles Hawtrey played the swell who was tripped up by the Pantaloon outside the butcher's shop, and Arthur Roberts appeared as the policeman who arrested him. Letty

Lind was the Columbine, Edmund Payne the Clown, and Willie Warde an inimitable Harlequin. I appeared as the Fairy Queen, and as I came up the trap, wand in hand, Herbert Campbell sprang a surprise on me. He had only to say: "Who are you?" my reply being: "I am the Fairy Queen"; but he wrote his part up, saying:

> "Fairy Queen, now then, Miss Terriss,
> None of your little tricks;
> We all know who you are:
> You're Mrs. Seymour Hicks."

This impromptu of his caused much amusement, as I couldn't help laughing.

Arthur Roberts, then in his zenith, I may say was extremely naughty at all the benefit entertainments to which he gave his invaluable services, and was the terror of all the "legits," as serious actors are called, for they never knew what surprise he had in store for them. On this occasion he was cast for the foreman of the jury in *Trial by Jury*, it being, I suppose, thought safe to have him chained up in the box with nothing to say. But he was not to be defeated, for when the twelve good men and true were seated he very quietly opened the door at the end of the jury box, and putting a pair of boots outside it, went to sleep. The laughter this brought forth continued for almost minutes, and W. S. Gilbert, who as the Associate of the Court was seated quite close to him, was so furious that I am sure he turned purple under his make-up; the operetta being a classic and its business written in stone.

At Ellen Terry's benefit the first act of *Money* was given, every part being played by the greatest celebrities. To Arthur Roberts was allotted the part of a servant, all he had to do being to introduce the various characters as they entered for the reading of the will. Surely, everyone thought, there was nothing outrageous he could embark on on this occasion. But wasn't there? For, instead of announcing the actors by their names in the piece as rehearsed, he substituted their own, with the result that there was a shout of laughter as each star came on. It was not Mr. Alfred Evelyn, it was Mr. Beerbohm Tree—Mr. John Hare, Mr. Charles Wyndham, and so on through the entire cast.

What a man was Arthur Roberts, with a mind of quicksilver and a face for which the greatest of French pantomimists would have given a King's ransom.

At Nellie Farren's benefit Henry Irving recited "The Dream of Eugène Aram," just prior to the Harlequinade, in front of a drop scene, and the noise behind it, as all the stars in London met and hobnobbed, telling each other of their various successes (none, of course, have failures) was so appalling that the great tragedian was obliged to commence the poem three times before he could be heard, and ultimately only obtained silence behind by going up and banging the cloth vigorously, much to the amusement of the audience, who, however, were spellbound when he did begin, and wouldn't let him leave the stage when he had finished.

The end of the afternoon was very sad, for Nellie Farren, the people's idol, being crippled with rheumatism, was wheeled on before the audience who adored her, to bid them a last farewell. There were few either in front of the curtain or on the stage who had dry eyes, for they had all known her as the sprightliest of dancers, the gayest of singers, and the most vital spark that burlesque had ever known.

Miss Terry's benefit was on the same gigantic scale, and the afternoon was in every way as memorable, except that its last note was not one of real sadness, for I don't think anyone present really believed that this elf-like creature was never to be seen again, and happily they were right. At the close of the entertainment she read a very beautiful speech, bidding her comrades and her public good-bye. It was written on sheets of foolscap, and when the curtain fell for the last time she gave it to me as a keepsake. I at once had it bound in vellum and Auntie Nell's name written across the cover in letters of gold.

I decided to make a most wonderful autograph book that day, and using a splash net across the stage door caught every big fish in the theatre. What a priceless collection it is! The last celebrity I remember to oblige me was Mr. William Clarkson, the greatest wig-maker and surely the most unique personality in his own particular profession the world has or will ever see.

The stories about him I'm sure would fill a volume. Rumour has it, and I am certain for once that inaccurate Dame is right, that he makes

most of them up himself. He is a brilliant advertiser and knows better than anyone living that a laugh against oneself is the most certain of travellers.

Who can forget his remark after a first night when he was asked if the play he had been to was a success? "Success?" said the brilliantine one. "I should think it was. You couldn't see a join." For the benefit of the uninitiated a join is where the scalp of a wig meets the forehead.

And who could have invented the story of Willie at Windsor and the late Queen Victoria, but himself. This is how he tells it: "Oh! yes, everything went off at the Castle *très chic*—most divine. Made all the Royalties up myself. Amateur show it was, and most of them better than real actors. They were all so gracious, just like ordinary people—put you at your ease at once. You know, real ladies and gentlemen—called me Willie and all that. One thing happened though, a scream—made me feel hot and cold all over. I was coming out of one of the Princesses' bedrooms after having done her hair, and who should I walk into but Queen Victoria—right into her arms. She drew herself up and said: 'Mr. Clarkson, what are you doing in that room?' Well, for the moment I was quite flustered, but I collected myself and said: '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*,' Your Majesty. This put everything quite right, for she seemed delighted with my French; I suppose because Her Majesty understood the language as well as I do. At least I've been told she's very well educated."

The only rival Mr. Clarkson had in his business

years ago was Mr. Fox, and the story goes that when that gentleman died, Mr. Clarkson, to show his sorrow, decked his entire shop window with crape hair and had all the wigs in it put at half mast on their stands.

But I mustn't ramble on too much about my old friend, though I must add that apart from being a great artist in his business he is the kindest of men, and has never once in his whole career ever sued an actor or an actress who owed him money, and at one time or another there have been hundreds.

It was during the run of *The Circus Girl* that once being at Brighton for the week-end I went to get my hair washed. Not a very original thing to do perhaps, and I shouldn't mention the fact except that the gentleman who had covered my head with soap and had it pushed well into a basin was extremely voluble about the theatre, and seemed to be very knowledgeable on the subject. Thinking that he had recognized me I discussed various pieces with him in general, and happened to remark: "I see the touring company of *The Circus Girl* was here last week." "Yes," said the man, "Ethel Haydon was with it, and you can take it from me, Miss, she's much better than Ellaline Terriss. I saw them both." There was not that amount of curl in my hair as there should have been when I left his establishment.

In mentioning Brighton, Mr. Harry Preston told me a story which amused me very much, of a Cockney visiting that seaside lung of London for the first time. The man got out at the station, and looking at the sea was dumbfounded, as he

had never seen it before. The tide was up, and thinking that the boatmen who were shouting to the visitors had a proprietary right in it, he went up to one of them and asked him if they sold the seawater by the bucket. "Oh! yes," said the sailor, "as much as you like at threepence a quart." "Right," said the visitor, "I'll have four quarts. I'm going for a drive, but I'll come back in a couple of hours and fetch it." And he did so. By this time the tide had gone out and he was so bewildered to see the dry sand that all he said was: "My word, you do do a trade here!"

CHAPTER IX

"OUT OF THE BLUE"

THE Circus Girl had been running many months when I was obliged to retire from the cast of the Gaiety for the happiest of reasons. The dearest wish of every woman was to be granted me. I left the theatre with a light heart, for I heard good wishes for my happiness on all sides and saw in the faces of my fellow workers gentle looks which seemed to say: "We shall be thinking of you. Everything will be well." But alas! it was not to be. My little boy only lived two days. None but those who have suffered such a staggering blow can understand what it means—all the months of happy planning, the choosing of a name, hopes of possessing, the joy of the future, all gone. To both my husband and myself the world seemed to have come to an end. Thirty years have passed, and though we both remember, our abiding sorrow has never been alluded to.

For ages I wondered why Providence had thought fit to take our all, but when the morning of the Fourth of August, 1914, dawned, the terror of what

losing a grown man would have meant made me understand that perhaps Fate had been merciful.

This year was one of tragedy indeed. Lying dangerously ill myself, within a week of losing my boy my dear father met his death, and a very little while afterwards my dear mother followed him. I do not intend to dwell on sacred sorrows, and I only mention this terrible time as it would be impossible for me in writing this little book about myself not to do so.

Of the details of my father's end I know little or nothing. I am grateful to say that those nearest and dearest to me have always guarded me from the knowledge of things which would have completely broken my heart, and I have been content to say "Thy will be done," in the certain knowledge that some day I know my dear ones and myself will meet again.

Heartbroken at the loss of my baby and the death of my parents, I was nearly distracted, and longed, as many another woman has, for something to take the place of my little one, and by doing so, if not forgetting, I have at least learned not continually to remember.

I was told by eminent specialists that I could never hope to have a child—(how wonderful are specialists)—and so I decided to adopt one. My then *young* man agreed. Anything, as he said, to make me happy; and I found a sweet little Irish girl whom I made my own. I called her Mabel, and what she meant to me at that time it would be impossible to say. She filled the great big gap in my life, and to Providence and *her* I shall always

be grateful. To-day she is a grown woman, still a happiness, still very Irish, and still mine, and always will remain so.

When my health returned, work being the thing I longed for most, I made up my mind to return to *The Circus Girl* and the Gaiety as quickly as possible.

Never shall I forget the night I came back. The house was crowded from floor to ceiling, and when I was discovered alone on the stage seated on a tin trunk as a little schoolgirl lost in Paris, I thought the shouts of sympathetic welcome would never end. Indeed, it only stopped when, unable to bear the strain any longer, I burst into tears. I wasn't very strong and I just couldn't help it. The noise in the house died down into a long, low hush, which was a strange thing to hear in this place of dance and laughter, but it enabled me to recover myself, and I tried to do my best for the great big-hearted British public who that evening had held out their hands to a poor little friend.

It was altogether a very difficult night for everyone concerned. The comedy scenes which as a rule went with roars of laughter were received in a subdued way by comparison with other nights, and grateful as I was for the love which had been shown me I was glad to get home quietly with my old man, to, as it were, start life all over again.

After a phenomenal run *The Circus Girl* came to an end and *The Runaway Girl*, written by Seymour and Harry Nicholls (Herbert Campbell's pantomime partner), was produced with tremendous success, running as it did for nearly two years.

The music was again by Ivan Caryll and Lionel

Monckton, and most of Lionel's numbers falling to me my part was as good as any I had yet played.

Seymour, leaving the Gaiety for this production, went into straight comedy under Mr. Edwardes' management to star with the inimitable Miss Ellis Jeffries at the Duke of York's Theatre, and so new stage lovers were found for me in the persons of Louis Bradfield and poor Lionel Mackinder, who later gave his life for his country in the Great War. He was a sweet, lovable man, a beautiful dancer, and simple and modest to a degree.

It was during the run of *The Runaway Girl* that I appeared at many benefit matinées. One, I remember, took place at His Majesty's, when I played opposite Sir Herbert Tree in *The First Night*, and a very awkward thing happened. I was alone with him on the stage in a garden when the house piece on the right-hand side toppled over and fell with a crash behind me. Sir Herbert, who was of a very nervous disposition, turned round bewildered and seemed at a loss to know what to do. There was a very trying pause, but as luck would have it, I, feeling something ought to be done, said to him, as he was playing the part of an old actor: "Don't worry, you're only bringing down the house as usual," which, I may say, saved the situation. There was great applause. The scene-shifters did their work quickly and the incident was forgotten.

Never was there a more lovable man or more charming companion with his inimitable sense of humour than Sir Herbert Tree.

When war broke out he, it may be remembered,

was at Marienbad, only escaping from Germany at the very last moment. He arrived in London with nothing but the clothes he stood up in, his motor-car and all his luggage having been abandoned at the Frontier. Seymour meeting him at the Garrick Club, he told him what had happened, and in the midst of bewailing his misfortune he said suddenly: "I know what I'll do, I'll send a telegram to the Kaiser. I'll say: 'You gave me a third-rate order for acting—I've left you a second-class car for acting just as badly.'" His imagination was tremendous, his generosity as great, and his heart was a child's.

He was a very great figure and to-day is sadly needed as a real head for my profession.

In the old days when the London theatrical season ended with Goodwood in July, and began again about the middle of September, it was the custom for the principals to take their holidays during these months and let their understudies and perhaps the public enjoy themselves. This I always did, and invariably spent them shooting and fishing in Scotland.

I am not a great fisher, but I may say that I happen to be a very good shot with a 20 bore. To show how extremely careful people who are before the public have to be in what they say or do, one season, shooting on the Twelfth, the year being an extraordinarily bad one in Argyllshire, and the bags being more than thin all over Scotland, an enthusiastic press agent, who must have known more about Hampstead Heath than a moor, learning that I was on a sporting holiday, managed to get inserted

in the London papers: "Ellaline Terriss kills 40 brace of grouse to her own gun." The news was given headlines and it was on the contents bills. This was bad enough, and made me look very silly in the eyes of those who were acquainted with the conditions of the shooting season, but there was worse to come, for when I returned to London I found a sheaf of letters awaiting me from perfect strangers saying I ought to be ashamed of myself for being so cruel, that they had always thought I was a gentle young woman, and that they would never come to see me act again. As a matter of fact, on this particular "Twelfth" I was one of six guns who got eight brace, my addition to the day's activities being only a brace and a half. There are certainly some strange people in this wonderful world of ours.

Charles Brookfield happened to meet me on my return to London and pretended to be very much shocked. Poor fellow, he was in consumption and was just off to the South. On someone inquiring where he was going he replied jauntily: "To Italy, my boy, to take my performing bacilli for a change of air."

He made many enemies, for he had a tongue like a rapier, but at heart he was really a very good-natured man, his fault being that his judgment never bridled his wit.

At the rehearsals of a very indifferent play I was with him in at the Court Theatre, the author, who was extremely pompous, blamed the actors for what appeared, and afterwards turned out to be, a very decided muddle, and called out from the

stalls to the company : " This last act is very bad." As quick as a flash Brookfield, who was on the stage, replied : " I know it is, but we didn't write it."

And it was he who, when meeting the late George Grossmith on Mr. Grossmith's return from a triumphant tour in America, was most politely cruel and unkind. The eminent entertainer was saying that he had made thirty thousand pounds with only a piano and a dress suit, while London actors had to find a production, take a theatre and engage a large company to support them. " It's ridiculous," said Mr. Grossmith. " I know it is," said Charles Brookfield, " but then, you see, we don't all look so extremely funny as you do in a dress suit."

CHAPTER X

TERRISS, HICKS, FROHMAN & CO.

WHEN *The Runaway Girl* was on the wane my engagement at the Gaiety was also drawing to a close, and I had to make up my mind whether to sign a new contract with the Gaiety Company or seek fresh fields and pastures new. Seymour had gone into comedy, and after very careful deliberation and taking the advice of our friends we decided it would be wise for us to try and establish a trade-mark together, for the combination of a man and a woman in my profession we knew, if successful, had always been more enduring than the position of a single star, however brilliant.

I think it was Miss Terry who gave the casting vote which decided me to leave the premier musical comedy theatre. She said: "Ella, my child, for a girl this form of entertainment, when you have achieved all you can in it, as you have, only means standing on the top of a ladder with a hundred young ladies pulling at your pretty petticoats." How sound this was it did not take me long to realize, for musical comedy is of all branches of the theatre the one in which youth and good looks in a woman

count above all other things, and she who doesn't leave it in good time may be sure it will leave her. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of successful musical comedy *ingénues* can be little more than pretty squirrels in a cage turning a gilded wheel until the public, tiring of watching them, moves on.

So Seymour and myself took the plunge.

Charles Frohman, the great American Manager, had always told us that if ever we thought of becoming "a team," as he put it, we could come to him, and so we accepted the five years' contract he offered us, our joint salary being £75 a week, and a third of the profits with no risk. Not financially a wonderful bargain to-day perhaps, but in those days very good indeed.

When the hour came for leaving the Gaiety I naturally felt like the Captain in *Pinafore*—"sad and sorry," for the five years had been happy, professionally, beyond words.

When the news became known in the theatre that I was going away, there was something of a minor earthquake. Mr. Edwardes did everything to persuade me to stay, as did Lionel Monckton and Felix Caryll, all of them, including the directors, holding out every kind of inducement to get me to alter my mind; but I was adamant, and I have never regretted the step.

I was really unhappy, however, about one thing connected with the change. Mr. Edwardes, of whom I was very fond, was deeply offended and, indeed, was never the same again to me. I don't mean that he was unkind, but drifting out of his life theatrically I gradually saw less and less of him

socially, until I ceased to meet him at all except by accident.

It must not be forgotten that George Edwardes was an emperor in the world of the theatre in these days—you were either under his banner or you didn't exist. I am sure in his heart I always had a large corner, but his feelings toward Seymour altered entirely. He looked upon him as the villain of the piece, and after a regrettable quarrel about the situation, these two devoted friends parted company never to speak to each other again, although I knew Seymour was still very fond of him, and to-day thinks, as I do, that there has never been a musical comedy manager that could hold a candle to him.

On saying good-bye to the Gaiety we started operations under the banner of Charles Frohman.

Here was a Prince of Managers.

A great human being and the most understanding of men. Hidden away beneath a funny little exterior, for he was short and stout, he had a heart of gold. His race had every reason to be proud of him, for he was the most generous of Jews, who, I am sure, was quite incapable of thinking wrong, or of doing even a rival who had treated him poorly a bad turn. He was quixotic to a degree, sometimes almost foolishly so. He seldom had contracts in writing, for his word, the world of the theatre knew, was more than his bond.

Seymour and I were connected in business with him for many years without so much as a scrap of paper. If any query arose his method was always to inquire, "What gave you that impression?" He

would listen to the explanation, and if he realized why one had construed a conversation to mean so and so, he would say, "Yes, I see why you thought so. You're quite right. Have it your way." If, on the other hand, he had a fair argument to advance in a friendly dispute, he'd say "I think I am right, don't you?" and we always gave in to him, for we knew how scrupulously just and generous he was.

Outside business as well as in it, we were both devoted to him. He was a great big man about whom nothing but good has ever been spoken. By his lamented death, when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed, we lost not only, I know, an affectionate friend, but a wise counsellor.

He had a colossal sense of humour and even in times of disaster could laugh. He was also full of common-sense advice on all occasions and often said simple things which had a world of meaning in them. One of his maxims in discussing a rival management was "Never mind what the other fellow's doing—let us get on with our own job," and another, "If you must lose your temper, never do so in public. Go up to your bedroom, bite the wardrobe and come out smiling."

As an illustration of his sense of the ridiculous, I remember the way he discharged his valet. The man was an excellent servant, but for years had often tried his master very highly by not being sober when he was most wanted. At last the kindly and long-suffering Mr. Frohman could stand this behaviour no longer and decided to finish with him. And he got rid of him in this amusing manner. The man was in his bedroom hopelessly intoxicated and asleep

on his back. All our manager did was to gum a label on his forehead on which were written three words: "You are discharged."

We opened at the Criterion with a wonderful cast, which included Fanny Brough, Alfred Bishop and Henry Kemble, in an adaptation from the French called *My Daughter-in-Law*. It proved to be only a moderate success, and this was followed by another French adaptation, *The Masked Ball*. It failed dismally, the chief cause being that I had to play a drunken scene in it. I was quite bad in this particular effort, and even in my mild attempt at inebriation shocked the public and the critics, the latter saying that I should never have been given such a part to play and that they were glad the piece had failed to please the audience, so that few of my admirers would have a chance of seeing me wholly out of my element. In fact, the situation was summed up in the words of the Two Black Crows: "Even if I had been good they wouldn't have liked it."

But after these April showers came the inevitable sunshine, and Mr. Frohman one morning sent for me to say he had been lucky enough to come to an arrangement with the Messrs. A. and S. Gatti and that we were to go to the Vaudeville Theatre for five years under their joint management with him. To say I was delighted at the prospect would not convey my feelings. The whole Gatti family had been my father's life-long friends and I had known them intimately since I was a little girl, having not only spent many holidays with them in Switzerland, but being constantly in the company of Madame Gatti,

a more adorable woman than whom never stepped. The success of the original Brothers Gatti was phenomenal in all they undertook, but the good judgment of this lady, who was truly great in every best sense of the word, contributed largely to the foundation of the fortune of these two lovable, honest and upright men.

Agostino was the elder, a man of quick decision and iron resolve. Stephano was the younger, less combative perhaps, but also a man of great determination.

Alas! these owners of the Adelphi and Vaudeville Theatres have both passed away, but they have left behind them to carry on their great traditions the sons of the elder, Rocco and John—little boys when I first romped with them, but now men of great affairs; John indeed, who has not only been Mayor of Westminster and afterwards Chairman of the London County Council, but has received for his services to his country a more than well deserved knighthood.

Having left Ascot, we were now living in Bedford Square, our home being bounded on the north by the house of Forbes-Robertson, on the north-east by that of the Gattis, and but a few doors away by the domicile of Weedon Grossmith, who added to the gaiety of the community by painting the front door of his Adam residence a brilliant pink. Our engagement at the Vaudeville was one line of unbroken successes. The first piece we put up, a farce from the French called *Self and Lady*, had only a moderate run, it is true, but with this exception all the other productions were phenomenal hits. They included *Sweet and Twenty* by Basil Hood, which ran for 235

performances, *Bluebell in Fairyland* by Seymour and Walter Slaughter registered 294 performances, *The Catch of the Season* by Seymour and Cosmo Hamilton, 621 performances, *Quality Street* by Sir James Barrie, 450 nights, *Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carrol's inimitable story, and *The Cherry Girl*, between them, 350 performances.

What delightful and joyous memories each and every one of these pieces brings back to me as I write their names again after many years, memories of the dear people who were in them with me and who were part of one of the happiest slices of my life's cake.

Looking back, I see in my mind's eye a procession of wonderful people, some of them naturally of more outstanding merit than others, but all of them "something" in their own particular line. Beautiful women, brilliant men and clever children compose this host, who smilingly nod to me from the long ago as they pass by. Alas! there are many whose laughter is but an echo from that bourne of no returning, but to me they will always live as long as I do, for in my heart they can never die.

Sweet and Twenty was a charming comedy, and although as light as thistledown, being the simple love story of a young sailor and an old country clergyman's daughter, instantly caught the fancy of the public. The cast was a really splendid one, including as it did that grand old actor, J. D. Beveridge, Fred Emney, Mary Rorke, and that splendid American star, Holbrook Blinn. Captain Basil Hood, who wrote it, had a pretty turn of wit, both lyrically and in dialogue. He was a quiet,

somewhat taciturn man, and his tragic end some years later shocked all who knew him.

The play at the beginning of its run was preceded by a one-act piece called *You and I* by Seymour, and was acted by Gracie Leigh, Florrie Lloyd, Stanley Brett and J. C. Buckstone. After many months dear Jack Buckstone, who, with his sweet wife Addie Buckstone, were members of our company for nearly twenty years, prepared a one-act version of "The Christmas Carol" and called it *Scrooge*. This took the place of *You and I* before *Sweet and Twenty* and proved a tremendous success, Seymour appearing in the name part, which he has now played some 2,000 times.

It was during the run of *Sweet and Twenty* that to my delight and surprise we received a command from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to come to Sandringham and appear there on the occasion of the Princess Maud's birthday. Our old friend Mr. George Ashton arranged the programme, which consisted of *Scrooge*, to be followed by the duologue *Papa's Wife*, in which I played with Seymour, and the other item of the performance was one given by that comic genius Dan Leno. The whole affair was kept a secret from the young Princess, His Royal Highness wishing to give her a real surprise.

The evening was not a state function by any means, the Prince of Wales having invited only the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood and his tenants. I think all the members of the Royal Family were at Sandringham at the time. I well remember that, as the Duke and Duchess of York,

their present Gracious Majesties were of the assembly, and the atmosphere of the whole evening was, if one may be permitted to say so, more that of a charming country house party than of a royal residence.

During the fitting up of the stage in the ball-room and the necessary rehearsal, the Prince of Wales came personally to inquire if we were comfortable and if everything was being done for us. This, we assured His Royal Highness, was the case, and with his usual kindness and forethought he gave instructions that Seymour and myself should be taken to see the decorations in the dining-room for the birthday party. The late Marquis de Soveral showed us where the Prince's guests were to be entertained, and one thing that I have never forgotten were the little silver pepper and salt cellars which were always used by the Princess of Wales and were taken wherever Her Royal Highness might be. They were two little silver hens of exquisite design. It is strange how amidst marvellous surroundings such simple things impress one.

We were then taken to the kitchens, and I had never seen anything like them before. In front of the great open fire was a huge spit, on which turned ducks, woodcock and snipe, all being basted by two chefs. It reminded me of pictures I had seen of lay brothers in a mediæval abbey or the preparation for the Feast of the Heron in the days of Henry VIII.

The whole performance we gave that night was a success, and never shall I forget the Prince's delight as he laughed unrestrainedly at Dan Leno. I think

the song he made the greatest hit with was "The Huntsman." The audience rocked when in his woebegone manner he described his hunting experiences and sadly related how after his mount had thrown him he took "a liqueur of ditch." It was altogether a great night.

At the end of the entertainment Seymour and I were sent for and were the recipients at the hands of our Royal Patron of two beautiful presents. I was given a lovely brooch set in diamonds, emeralds and rubies, and Seymour became the proud possessor of a pair of diamond sleeve links with "E." on one side and a crown on the other.

Dan Leno was presented by His Majesty with a beautiful tie pin. This he wore for ever afterwards. I think from all accounts that he not only slept with it on his night attire but that he pinned it on his bathing suit when he went swimming.

Poor Dan Leno! What a genius. He was the Grimaldi of his day. A small frail person with, to my mind, a tragic face, Dickensesque to a degree and human beyond description. His eyes were like two wistful black lamps, and his upturned nose with its big nostrils was well married to a large mouth turned down at the corners. He had a thin husky voice which reached every corner of the auditorium, and within him he had a fire which would have burned to a cinder a ten times more solid frame than he possessed. On our return journey from Sandringham to London he talked without effort for a couple of hours and kept us spellbound telling us of the vicissitudes of his early life, painting comic pictures of places and people with a Balzac touch, and

though they were all funny stories his sad little face brought tears to my eyes as he told us of how as a boy he had starved and been obliged to sleep for two nights in succession against the bronzed lions outside the Great Hall at Liverpool.

The Cherry Girl, which followed *Sweet and Twenty*, was a really lovely production designed by that master of his art, Wilhelm. The company was a splendid one and included dear Courtice Pounds and that sweet singer, Carmen Hill.

One evening during the run of *The Cherry Girl* that bravest of brave men, who did such noble work for our blinded soldiers, Sir Arthur Pearson, came to my room and asked me if I would give my name to be used in his continual appeals for the Children's Fresh Air Fund. Naturally I was only too delighted to do so, and I have been connected in a very minor way with that magnificent movement ever since. I wish I was of more use to it, for there is no more human charity in the world. For the Coliseum, Seymour wrote a one-act play called *The Slum Angel*, having the Fresh Air Fund as its theme, in which I appeared. It brought me lots of money for the Fund, and it is curious how continually cheques addressed to me arrive from the farthermost ends of the Empire, sent by soldiers and sailors, farmers and miners who have read some little story in *Pearson's Magazine* of a children's outing. The ever-generous racing community have been especially kind in their donations, and apart from the sums received from them and others there is great happiness in knowing what good hearts there are everywhere, and how many gentle

thoughts are possessed in secret by many who pretend to be hard business men.

It was in my character of the little Princess in *The Cherry Girl* that my old friend Albert Toft did a bust of me for the Academy. It was voted a wonderful likeness and was quite one of the portrait successes of the year. Seymour had a replica made of it in marble, and I am proud to think the Committee of the Garrick Club accepted it to place among their many treasures.

That charming artist Lee Hankey painted his first picture in oils of me as Bluebell, and a most splendid portait it is.

Following *The Cherry Girl* came *Quality Street.*

Never shall I forget my delight at being chosen by Sir James Barrie to play Phœbe Throssel in his beautiful piece.

How inspiring to act opposite Marion Terry, to be waited on by that bundle of merriment Rosina Fillipi, and to discuss recruiting for the Napoleonic Wars with such a sergeant as George Shelton, afterwards the lovable pirate of *Peter Pan.* That unique personality Herbert Vane Tempest was an ensign of the Waterloo period, and among the ladies were that fine actress Henrietta Watson, pretty Constance Higham and Irene Rooke. Of the little boys who were my pupils in the play, it was strange to meet in Canada lately, the lad on whose tummy I used to write a big " S " and say " Chest, Georgie, chest," to the delight of a Barrie audience. To-day he is a married man with his own little Georgies about him.

Quality Street was by far the sweetest play I ever

acted in, filled as it was from beginning to end with the quaint and beautiful thoughts of its great author.

Seymour played the part of my lover, Valentine Brown, and in the two last acts, he being supposed to have lost one arm in France, had to act with an empty sleeve pinned to his breast. Sir James Barrie, on being asked by a friend why he had made his hero a one-armed man, replied : " It was the only way I could think of to keep Seymour Hicks quiet."

Our friend Sir Edwin Lutyens, then Mr. Lutyens, designed the whole of the *mise en scène* for *Quality Street* and looked after the accuracy of everything for his friend Sir James Barrie, even down to such small items as the velvet glove which hung next the fireplace for the handling of the Georgian tongs. How different must all these trivial things of the past (if he remembers them) be compared to that mighty creation of his brain, " The Simple Cenotaph."

With the Press and public the whole company made a great success, with the exception of Seymour. The Press gave him very poor notices for what I know the public thought was a splendid performance. Bemoaning this fact one day to Charles Wyndham, that great actor comforted him by saying, " Don't worry, my boy ; I got awful notices for my first performances of David Garrick. I was compared to Sothern most unfavourably. I play it no better to-day, but now the papers are eulogistic. Don't worry. There is only one thing to be frightened of, and that is when you get *good* notices. Then be careful ! "

I had a memorable afternoon during the time I lived as "Phœbe of the ringlets," for Sir James Barrie did me the honour of reading *Peter Pan* to me. I was to have been his first Wendy and Seymour his Captain Hook. This, to my infinite regret, never came to pass, for I had to play Wendy in real life, with my own precious Betty to be a little mother to.

CHAPTER XI

AN "OYSTER-BED OF SUCCESS"

BLUEBELL in *Bluebell in Fairyland* I think comes easily second favourite of mine of the many parts I have played, as it brought me in touch with children in every scene in which I appeared, a thing which has always given me indescribable pleasure.

Among many of the little mites who danced and sang with me on the stage in this piece, danced quite oblivious of the audience and laughed as if the whole thing was one big romp, many have grown up to be famous in their work or in the greater world outside it. Phyllis Dare was my tot of a sister. She was a beautiful child and quite the most self-reliant and imperturbable little thing imaginable. I remember once her mother telling me that Phyllis came home after a very long rehearsal and on being asked if she was tired, replied, "Oh! yes, very. I've had an awful day with Hicks." She was then at the mature age of eleven.

It was Phyllis, too, who, sitting in the wings watching me discussing the arrangement for a song which became famous, "The Honeysuckle and the

Bee," turned to the stage manager and said, "I could play Bluebell much better than Miss Terriss. She's old—she looks quite eighteen."

Gwennie Brogden was brought to me by Mrs. Arthur Wilson and played with us. She had a voice of extraordinary range for a child of fifteen, and made a great hit.

Clever Iris Hoey began her stage career with us at the Vaudeville, but was not there long. She was full of high spirits and caught Seymour in a rather early morningish mood during her revels.

Eva Kelly, too, who afterwards married Mr. Gould, was one of our prettiest little girls. And the beautiful Eva Carrington, who later became Lady de Clifford, started as a child at the Vaudeville and was with us for several years.

Gladys Cooper, who was the loveliest of the lovely even as a little girl, played Bluebell on tour, though she was not in the London production, and oh! there were so many whose names to-day are well known that it would be impossible for me to mention them all.

Most of the tiny boys, I think, when they grew up left the stage, but a very interesting thing about a lad who did not give up my profession happened only a short time ago. I was sitting in a box at the Prince of Wales's Theatre and applauded vigorously one of the most perfect male dancers I have ever seen, being quite unconscious that he was an old friend of mine. But I found out he was, for later in the evening I received a note which said: "Dear Miss Terriss, I am so delighted you liked my dance. I don't think you recognize me, but I was one of the

two cats in *Bluebell* in the revival at the Aldwych, and a very troublesome little cat I think you will remember I used to be. Yours sincerely, Anton Dolin."

I was never more surprised in my life. My little cat this perfect artist !

The only other boy I can call to mind who made a name for himself away from the theatre and did magnificently in the War, was Master Sawyer, who joined up as a private in 1914 and was a full colonel in 1918. I could hardly believe it possible, as I talked to the bronzed soldier in Highland uniform whose breast was covered with decorations, that he was the sweet-voiced thrush of the Cock Robin Ballet who had brought down the house so often in a peaceful woodland glade.

The law insisted that the children employed in any play must attend school in the theatre. They were all dear little things, but at times somewhat a handful. One youth was an expert with a bonnet pin, and employed it good-humouredly to his next-door neighbour's calves in any chorus in which he felt he was hidden from view, while another I remember used to do good work with an ink squirt, which did not improve the colour of flesh-coloured tights.

Many were the funny things which happened during these plays in which children appeared. I remember one in particular which amused us all. It was during a dress rehearsal of *Bluebell.* Five little boys dressed as apples danced down in the ballet, and Seymour called out to know why there were not six, as had been arranged. "Oh ! if you

please, Mr. 'Icks," one of the five boys answered, " the other apple is up in the dressing-room being sick."

The principal characters in *Bluebell in Fairyland* were all taken by delightful and clever people. Handsome Florence Lloyd, who was with us for many years, played one of the chief parts, and Margaret Fraser was not only a great beauty but was our solo dancer. No one I have ever seen could lift a pointed toe slowly above her head without any apparent effort as she did.

Mr. Murray King played the chief low comedy part, and excellent he was, being in many productions with us, while my very dear brother-in-law, the late Stanley Brett, was also in the play.

I remember going up one day not long ago and congratulating Mr. Hugh Wakefield on his extraordinarily amusing performance in *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*. I said, "I don't know you, Mr. Wakefield, but I must tell you how much you made me laugh." " My dear Miss Terriss," he replied, " I was one of the boys in *Bluebell* all through the run." As dear old Mr. Toole used to say, " Time does fidget."

It was just before one of the Christmas matinées that I, having been delayed, arrived very late at the theatre. The public had all gone in, and as I ran towards the stage door I passed a man and woman with three children who had been crowded out of the gallery. The children were crying with disappointment, but their father soothed them by saying, " Never mind, come on, I'll take you to the British Museum instead."

I could not speak of the Vaudeville without mentioning my old friend Mr. Clarke, its manager. He was as much part of it as the bricks and mortar, and was a great friend of mine, as was the Hon. Bernard Rollo, who, I think, saw *Bluebell in Fairyland* over two hundred times. He was a sort of fairy godmother to all the children, and the number of teas he gave the little mites and the pounds of chocolate he made them eat was, I think, responsible on several occasions for catastrophes such as that which happened to the apple in the ballet.

It was during the run of *Bluebell* that I first had the great honour of not only knowing Mrs. Kendal, but, I am proud to say, of becoming her friend. It would be as ridiculous as it would be impertinent if I were to comment, however slightly, on the genius of this mighty actress, but as one of her humble comrades I may perhaps be permitted to pay tribute to this great theatrical figure. I use the word " theatrical " not, as it is used so often wrongly, in the flamboyant sense of the word, but because Mrs. Kendal is, and always has been, the one woman above all others who has stood fearlessly for the theatre art and its traditions, not swayed by manager, or critic, or patron. And she has never been wrong. What she learned at the feet of Samuel Phelps as a girl of sixteen when she played Lady Macbeth with that great actor, *she knows*, and she has never hesitated to instil into the minds of all who have been privileged to support her or seek her aid, that great acting as an art is as unchangeable as the darkness of the night or the coming of the dawn. Fashions may come and go in

the theatre, noise may be acclaimed as power, inaudibility as reserved force, ineffective naturalness as the only true means of expression, and restless vitality as genius, but never has she ever failed to teach her brothers and sisters that the art of acting is "*to act*," for the great classics, which made and are the only thing that can make great actors, demand acting first, last and all the time. The modern school of play needs, of course, the Bond Street gown in place of the flowing drapery, but the arms that learned gesture above the waist in the latter are the whole basic structure on which the modern artist should mould all the effects that a less violent emotion calls for. Watch her at eighty to-day deliver a speech, and here is a lesson in poise, gesture and the timing of point which must be of more priceless value than the vapourings "of ten thousand teachers armoured in alibis and led by shallow highbrows." And of her jealousy of all that her great profession means to her, who can witness it without the deepest admiration? Enemies she has made, perhaps, of those who have trailed the robes of Thespis in the mud, for she has never hesitated to speak her mind about them. Unfair or incompetent criticism and the impudent personal paragraphist she has swept into the dustbin where they belong, and has never failed to condemn all forms of vulgarity, unfortunately so often indulged in by the individual for personal aggrandisement, or the belittling in the eyes of the public of *her theatre*, which is *her life*.

I make no apology for this ill-expressed little piece of reverence.

She saw *Bluebell in Fairyland* many times. I think she loved to watch the children as much as I did.

Dear Charlie Hawtrey, who, too, was very fond of children, also used to come and see our fairy play very often. Charles Hawtrey, known to everyone as "Genial Charles," was the greatest speaker of good lines and the most magnificent camouflager of bad ones our contemporary stage has ever known. Why is it that so wonderful a contributor to the joyousness of this often drab world was not permitted to live on for ever? I often think that Shakespeare must have been subconsciously aware of this birth to be, when he put into Hamlet's mouth his praise of Yorick. Charles the imperturbable—the child man, with bland-like eyes which always looked surprised when he was told of things which he had heard before. You lovable, charming gambler with fate—we shall never see your prototype again. You were as much London as London itself. And London is not itself without you. Always in financial difficulties, you lived a millionaire—a millionaire of fun, for who can forget your answer to that unfortunately necessary gentleman, the Official Receiver, when he put to you the question in examination, "When, sir, is the beginning of your financial year?" and you replied blithely: "Oh! every day." Who but a genius could have thought of such a reply as that? One immortal story told of Charles amongst a thousand others is the one of the man with a writ whom he found sitting in the hall of his flat when he came home one evening to dress for dinner. Charles most

courteously accepted the ugly blue document with a smile, asking the no doubt excellent father of a family if he would like a cigar and a whisky and soda. Even the law is not always teetotal, and he of the seedy suit accepted the kindly invitation. As he sat chatting to the great light comedian, he ventured to say how much he admired his work and how he loved playgoing. "Do you?" said Charles. "Perhaps you would like to come and see me act next week?" "Indeed I should," said the man. The genial one immediately went over to his writing desk and wrote. "Good-night," he said, handing him an envelope. "Present this at the box office a week from now." The recipient of Charles' bounty did so. The manager opened the envelope, and all that was in it was the writ the process server had delivered seven days before. Annoyed beyond measure at the imposition, the man said, "Give it me back. I'll go round and serve him with it again." "You can't," said the manager, "Mr. Hawtrey went to Homburg three days ago for his holiday."

Bluebell was originally designed for a Christmas entertainment, but it ran on long after that often by no means festive season, and as we played in it twice daily for some months and afterwards gave nine performances of it a week, my work, which called for my being on the stage from the rise of the curtain till its fall, was terribly trying.

The acting version of *Alice in Wonderland* was designed (a dream play also) on exactly the same lines and demanded no ordinary powers of endurance. Many times have I been asked how I

managed to keep so fresh at every performance. May I impart a little secret to all budding Bluebells and Alices. It was by sleeping. I have always made a habit, no matter where I was or what I was doing, of going to bed for two hours every afternoon, and by this means I always awakened as fresh as could be, ready and eager for the night's work. And may I, without appearing conceited, say that it is owing to this life-long habit, and nothing else, that I have managed to keep the few good looks Nature was kind enough to bestow upon me.

The real old actors, and they all lived for their work, dined about three and made a point of sleeping before they played. Henry Irving made a practice of this all his life, and nothing short of a King's command would have induced him to give up his hours of rest before going to the theatre.

The Catch of the Season, which was written for me by Seymour and Cosmo Hamilton, with music by various composers—the bulk of it, however, being by Herbert Haines—proved an enormous success, and packed the Vaudeville for nearly two years. It followed *Quality Street*.

Zena Dare played the part originally written for me, and perfectly charming she was as the little Mayfair Cinderella. She looked beautiful, and sang and danced her way into the hearts of the public, with whom she remained a great favourite until, as everyone knows, she became the Hon. Mrs. Maurice Brett, with a little Angela of her own.

Of my joy at having made the most successful of domestic productions—well, I can find no words

to express it. Of course, there never had been such a little girl as mine, and, of course, no baby aged one day had ever been so like its mother as her father said she was, or more like her father than her mother said she was. This, oddly enough, I have since learned, was not a very original thing for either of us to have discovered.

On the night of Betty's arrival, Seymour was, as is usual with devoted husbands, nearly distracted, and insisted on Sir Alfred Fripp sitting with him in the drawing-room while I was being cared for upstairs by skilled hands. It was just like our generous friend Alfred to give up his valuable time, and he did so willingly. When the news arrived that all was well, it appears that our daughter's father was so elated that he left home and found his way to the Imperial Restaurant, of which his friend, Mr. Oddenino, was the proprietor. There, from what I gather, they toasted the health of the Hicks family in no niggardly spirit, and at one in the morning, hearing there was a ball at the Hotel Cecil, asked themselves to it and informed each guest separately and confidentially of what had happened during the evening at Number 53, Bedford Square.

Of the six hundred letters and telegrams of congratulation which I received on Betty's birth, I often wonder how many came from the guests at the Hotel Cecil, who must have been much amused at the advent of two uninvited strangers at their gathering.

My darling Betty's christening was attended by a host of friends, all of whom at the church

Photo Ellis & Walery.

BETTY—ONE MONTH OLD

begged that she should be called after them. This, of course, was out of the question, but, as a matter of fact, the poor mite was given sixteen names, which included those of Mr. Frohman and Mr. Stephen Gatti, all of which were translated into the best Latin on the spur of the moment by dear Bernard Vaughan.

During the ceremony itself, which took place at St. Patrick's, Soho Square, Father Vaughan, being a Father of the Church and not an anxious parent, drenched Betty at the font, and Seymour, feeling a draught in every non-existent crevice, paced about, ready at any moment to ask our padre what he meant by splashing water about so carelessly, and a lot of my time was taken up nodding to him to keep quiet and behave himself. Suddenly the main door of the church was opened by an inoffensive looking little man who had come in to pray on his own account, and an icy blast blew in from without. In a flash my anxious other half dashed forward and flung the would-be worshipper into the daylight, and closing the doors, stood with his back against them till we were all ready to depart. What the poor man must have thought was going on, and whether he ever returned to St. Patrick's, I don't know, but, late as it is in the day, if this catches his eye I hope he will accept my family's most profound apologies.

Very soon after this, as I had to open at the Vaudeville, Betty was sent to the Royal York Hotel, Brighton, and placed with her nurse (my ever-treasured Flora Belben, who remained with us as one of the family for eighteen years) in the

care of England's most popular personality, Mr. Harry Preston, who looked after her as only Harry Preston could. With the true instinct of a born athlete he insisted on weighing her himself each morning on the office scales to see, as he put it, "If she was going along all right." This she certainly did, and his daily messages to me about her placed me under another of the many obligations which Seymour and myself have gladly been under to him for over thirty years.

What Harry Preston has done for charity and his millions of friends has earned him a dukedom. If some Minister with vision would only give him one, he would gain for his Party the votes of every real sportsman in the country. However, perhaps Mr. Preston is quite content to be a little king in a thousand hearts, which he certainly is!

Here let the story of my adoration for Betty, and the devotion for her by Seymour, and her dear love for us, have a curtain drawn about it, all there being left to say is that ever since she first learned to speak the three of us have laughed our way through storm, shipwreck and success, without paying heed to any of them.

I returned to the Vaudeville the happiest woman in the world, to play one of the jolliest parts I have ever appeared in. What a company I met, and how the piece used to go from start to finish. Sam Sothern, Ethel Mathews, Olive Morell, Ruby Ray, Rosina Fillipi, Barbara Deane, Mollie Lowell, Frank Wilson, Stanley Brett, J. C. Buckstone, Compton Coutts, Laurence Caird, Cecil Kinnaird, Pillie Jacobsen, and many others. And what

beautiful women all the Gibson girls were. Among them were Camille Clifford, whose figure was so wonderful that it hardly seemed possible; she afterwards became the Hon. Mrs. Bruce. Beautiful Marie Brenda, now Mrs. Harry Barclay; Alexandra Carlisle, a perfect Gibson type, who, beginning as Seymour's secretary, afterwards made a great name for herself; Eva Carrington, grown into a superb creature; Sylvia Storey, who looked the image of Nelson's Lady Hamilton, and who subsequently became the Countess Paulet, and a dozen others, all equally attractive in their own way. I doubt if so many lovely girls with such grace and style were ever before seen together in one company.

The little boy who played the Page was one of the outstanding successes of the piece. His name was Valchera. Seymour discovered him selling newspapers in Shaftesbury Avenue, and, attracted by his funny face and his odd clothes, which consisted of a short jacket, shorter long trousers, to which were added a pair of red woollen socks, he asked him if he would like to go on the stage. "Go on the boards?" the lad replied. "I should rush at it, guv'nor." This remark settled it, and a more unconscious and genuine comedian never stepped than this little street arab who took the house by storm every time he made an appearance. In after years, during the War, we all mourned him as having been killed, but only lately I have discovered that, although badly gassed, he is, I am thankful to say, alive in Australia, and the father of a family, all doing well.

In mentioning the name of Barbara Deane among the cast I must by no means pass her by without paying tribute to her really very beautiful voice. Had she elected to remain on the stage for many years she would have been a joy to all theatre-goers, but unfortunately she married, and by doing so threw up a career which would, I know, have turned out a wonderful one.

It was during our time at the Vaudeville that we had the great good fortune to find in the present Lord and Lady Esher the staunchest of friends, who were, if anything, kinder than the dear old Master of the Rolls and his Lady, who had both, at this period, alas! passed away at a great and honoured old age.

Lord Esher never ceased to help Seymour and myself, and it was entirely owing to his friendship and interest that the late King commanded us to present *Quality Street* at Windsor Castle on the occasion of the State visit of the late King and Queen of Portugal to our country.

What a never-to-be-forgotten night it was. Our whole company arrived at Windsor Castle early in the day to get the stage ready, and rehearse in the more limited space at our disposal. The performance took place in the Waterloo Chamber, a unique setting for Sir James Barrie's play of Napoleon's time, for on its walls are hung the pictures of many of the great Generals who were the Lieutenants of the Iron Duke.

It was during the afternoon, while rehearsing with the children who appeared in the second act, that I had the honour of being presented to

Queen Alexandra again, by our old friend George Holford.

The Queen had heard we were working, and had come to watch the little boys and girls. She was, I know, genuinely interested in all they were doing, for she sat down and made me tell her all about them—who they were, where they went to school, and how they were looked after. She at once put them at their ease, and after having spent an hour with them, bid them a gracious good-bye, turning as she did so to tell me she was sending me one of her birthday cakes which she wished me to have distributed among them when I returned to the Vaudeville Theatre the next day. This I did, and the occasion was made one of general rejoicing at a huge tea party the following afternoon.

The performance at the Castle commenced at ten o'clock in the evening, and the dazzling beauty of the ladies' Court dresses, and the magnificence of the uniforms in the auditorium took my breath away. We were all of us at first extremely nervous, and well we might be, for we were in the presence of not only our own great King and Queen, who were the Royal hosts of the sovereigns of Britain's most ancient allies, but to right and left and in every corner were Princes and Princesses of the Royal house, Peers and Peeresses of the realm, and every great officer of State.

It was an historic occasion, for it was the first Royal Command of the reign, and the Waterloo Chamber itself had not been used as a Theatre since Henry Irving had appeared in it before Queen Victoria in Lord Tennyson's *Becket*.

The play was received more than favourably, the applause throughout being led by King Edward himself.

At the end of the performance, Miss Marion Terry, Seymour and myself, were sent for to be presented to their Majesties in the State apartments, where a State Ball was about to commence. Their Majesties were kind beyond words. They told us to convey their pleasure to everyone concerned, and while the King most graciously told me that he didn't think I ought to cover my pretty hair, as he said, with a cap (I was wearing one of the period in the play), he turned to Seymour and laughingly said : " And your whiskers—don't ever wear them in private. I don't think ladies admire whiskers."

The King, on leaving us, told us to remain and watch the opening of the Ball : he said it would be a very pretty sight. We did remain. It was not only pretty—it .was a gorgeous spectacle. Never shall I forget it, the King leading the cotillion with Queen Amelia, and Queen Alexandra having as a partner the King of Portugal, who was a very fine and commanding figure.

That night we spent at Lord and Lady Esher's, and the sun had long risen in the heavens before we had finished discussing every detail of all the wonders we had seen, and had expressed our profound gratitude to our hosts.

Two weeks afterwards Seymour received a large silver cup on which was inscribed : " From King Edward the Seventh to Seymour Hicks, Actor. *Quality Street.* Windsor Castle," and with it came

a letter from Sir Dighton Probyn saying that their Majesties had been delighted with Mr. Barrie's charming play, and asking me to accept as a remembrance of the occasion an ornament from their Majesties which, I need hardly say, is my most treasured possession.

The Catch of the Season ran on merrily month after month, and looked like never developing into a walk. One night Mr. W. S. Gilbert sent me round a typical Gilbertian note. It read: "Mrs. Ellaline is perfectly delightful. We wouldn't have 'mister' at any price." This was followed by a week-end invitation which concluded with the sentence: "Mind you both come down to us. The country is looking lovely, and I myself am very pretty!"

We went down to Grimsdyke, and the country was lovely.

About this time I first met Mr. Arthur Wimperis, who even in his youth was certainly in the first flight of pungent humorists, though slightly, if possible, more acid than Charles Brookfield. I think his receipt for dealing with personalities has always been:

> "As praising them's not bliss,
> It's folly to be kind,"

but he is readily forgiven for his brilliance. What could be more devastating than his remark when he heard that a certain well-known actor had joined the Royal Naval Reserve during the War? He said: "Really; one of the Epsom Salts, I suppose." Or again, when someone said that a high-salaried

low comedian was as funny as a bag of nails, and he at once added, "Yes, without the points." This surely was as quick as his reply to a great music-hall impresario who, asking him how he had enjoyed the performance, received this witty answer: "How did I enjoy it? Oh, immensely! I wouldn't have left a turn unstoned."

It is very difficult to remember all the celebrated people with whom I came in contact during my happy time at the Vaudeville. They were legion. Among them, however, I recollect there was a boy from Jersey who called at the stage door several times with a play, but who says he never could gain admittance. His name was Frederick Lonsdale. If one could only have foreseen the future. Perhaps he didn't really call; anyhow, I'm sure he didn't do so more than once, for Freddie, as I now know him, must have always been the same "*Sans peur*—but with plenty of reproach."

Oh, dear! if there were only half a dozen Lonsdales the theatre would not be in the plight it is to-day. Alas! there is only one.

P. G. Wodehouse was also a struggler at this time, writing on the now defunct *Globe* newspaper. We knew him well, and to-day, although in his busy and superlatively successful life we seldom meet, when we do he has the same unspoiled boyish nature as he had when he stayed with us, and was christened "The Hermit" because he would insist on doing his writing hidden away in a plantation near our holiday house.

The King of Siam, who was at Oxford, used to come up to see us constantly. I was reading a

letter from his late Majesty only the other day, in which, amongst other things, he said: " And if you ever come to Siam I will give you some splendid quail shooting. Please do come." He was a charming and gracious young man and an enthusiastic playgoer. It is sad to think I shall never be able to accept that kingly invitation, for I know it would have been wonderful.

And what a lot we saw of that man of infinite jest, Comyns Carr. Dear Joe, will there ever be anyone quite like you ? For years never a holiday time came round but that this heaven-sent ray of sunshine didn't spend part of it with us. He was amusing from early morning till late at night, and saw fun in everything. His witticisms were flashed all over London, and unlike most wits, he was never unkind. I remember on one of our trips his picking up a Saturday morning paper and discovering that the play *Peril*, which had been revived at the Garrick, was coming to an abrupt conclusion. He said: " Ella, dear, would you mind asking them at church to-morrow to alter the hymn and sing instead ' For those in Peril at the G.' "

He was a man who couldn't stand humbug of any kind, and hated snobs, taking a delight in always saying, if he thought he scented one: " My father was a Belfast woollen draper." I never knew him to be at a loss for a reply, being as he was, one of the best after-dinner speakers in the country. A true story is told of him that, when as a guest of the late Lord Burnham at Hall Barn, where that kindest of men was entertaining the late King, then Prince of Wales, His Majesty during supper

suddenly turned to Joe, who was an advanced Radical, and said: "Mr. Carr, I'm surprised to hear you are a Radical." There was a silence, but Joe, without turning a hair, said simply: "Yes, sir, I am, but I never mention it in polite society."

Once I went with him to the first night of an extremely boring play, and try as he would I could see it was an effort for him to keep awake. I nudged him gently, but all he said was: "Oh! heavens, if this be Woking, let me dream again," which is almost a companion story to the one told of Oscar Wilde who, when asked what he thought of a *première* he had just come from, replied: "It's the best play I ever slept through."

But there, a volume could be filled with the many things Joe Carr said, and I must cry halt, for to try and set down everything I heard from people such as Sir Arthur Pinero, Charles Gill, Marshall Hall, John Hare and that grandest of Irish gentlemen T. P. O'Connor, and the dozens of other friends I met at this time, well, "space would not permit it," as the editors say, so I must cut my pen according to my paper. Though I must, I think, be excused for retailing an extremely amusing story of the Sicilian tragedian, Signor Grasso. When he appeared in England, his strenuous acting was so unlike anything London had seen before, that the public flocked to witness his passion and his leading ladies being torn to tatters at the same time. As a compliment during his season the actors of England gave him a big dinner, at the end of which Signor Grasso made the most impassioned speeches of thanks every time anyone said anything about him.

Near him sat a timid-looking little man, who acted as interpreter. All this unemotional visitor did after Grasso had perspired and shouted with enthusiasm at great length, was to rise from his seat and very meekly whisper: "Gentlemen, he say he tank you very-ar much-ar" or "He say he very-ar much oblige-ar." The evening over, Grasso in bidding his hosts good-night, kissed nearly everyone, including Fred Terry and Charles Somerset. These two real men and wonderful actors conducted him to the entrance of their very representative theatrical club and a cab was called. It was three in the morning. Grasso, who was living in Soho, over a little Italian restaurant, and apparently not wishing his address to be known, said to the cabman as he drove away: "Go the Lyric Theatre." Fred Terry, hearing this, turned in surprise to his old friend Somerset, and said: "Charles, why the Lyric Theatre at three in the morning?" "Oh!" replied Mr. Somerset, "I don't know. I expect he's forgotten to kiss the fireman."

The Catch of the Season had now run for many months over a year, and it was thought wise by Mr. Frohman that Seymour and myself should make our first tour of the English provinces. This we did, taking the entire London production with us. With the exception of the Covent Garden Opera Company, never since Sir Henry Irving's first tour with his Lyceum successes, had such a large company as ours set out from London. We travelled one hundred and eight people. We had a special train of our own, played to the capacity of every

theatre we visited, receipts which for many a year held the record of the houses we appeared in, but notwithstanding all this we made very little profit, our weekly expenses being somewhere in the neighbourhood of £850. But the tour, as a tour, was a triumphal procession. Huge crowds sometimes numbering as many as two and three thousand people met us on our arrival at the railway stations every Sunday. Lunches, suppers and entertainments during the day-time were provided for us everywhere, and we made friends of delightful and hospitable folk in the country who have remained valued ones to this day.

These were the happy hours for theatrical people, when there were no cinemas and no facilities as there are now for people in the country to run up and down to London at will, and the Music Halls had not then loomed large on the horizon with spectacles, catering only as they then did for those who enjoyed the single performer and therefore not drawing on the regular theatre public. Daylight saving, that menace to the play, was unknown. Greyhounds were put to their proper use, coursing, and not used as glorified *petit chevaux*, and a dozen other counter attractions, which include motor racing and flying, had not even been thought of. These were the merry and easy days never to return.

The Catch of the Season captured the provinces as it had the metropolis, and the kindness and enthusiasm we were received with everywhere was extraordinary. These were the times when young ladies and gentlemen did not hold hands in the playhouse and eat chocolates at the same time, as

they so often do now, making it impossible for them either to laugh or applaud.

To write of our success in one town would only be to write the same thing about it in another, and as I am sure this would be wearisome, I leave our charming excursion and its delightful memories without further comment.

CHAPTER XII

"THE GREATEST ROMAN OF THEM ALL"

ONE thing only marred the happiness of this tour. While we were playing at Edinburgh, I read the tragic news of Sir Henry Irving's sudden death. I, with the rest of my countrymen and women, was stunned. The public had lost a great servant, as he always chose to call himself in addressing them, but I had not only been robbed of a friend of my childhood but I knew what his death meant to my profession. Henry Irving dead! The man who had raised the actor's calling to an honoured position in the social life of the country, which it had never occupied till he by his genius, dignity and mighty personality seized it with both hands and insisted on it being placed on terms of equality with the sister arts and the liberal professions. Gone! Many there were who might follow in his footsteps, but the leader who had hewn his way into the open for his comrades, who could hope to follow him? Who has followed him? No one! A great beacon light on the rocky theatrical coast had ceased to illuminate the horizon. How many a wreck might there not be? Henry Irving thought of his profession imperially—his

fellows parochially. His individual interests always came last; the welfare of his art far before it. He understood nothing of jobbery or finance. Sums of money to him were only counters in a game, to be used for the buying of everything possible with which to adorn his beautiful mistress, the Drama. And he was dead! The blow was a crushing one not only for the actor but for every humble worker in theatre-land, as his help had always been unquestioning, and indeed almost foolishly his private resources had never been refused to the poor and needy.

It is true he was often imposed upon, but he only smiled when acquainted with the fact. He himself had graduated in the university of adversity, and he readily forgave those who, having fallen by the way, had seen fit to do what he himself could never have dreamed of doing.

What a man! It may be of interest to know that he had a rule in his theatre that no actor applying for a seat was ever to be refused, even if it were possible to sell it. The number of people he employed at good salaries simply because he had known them in his early days, or because he heard they were in want, was beyond belief. Had he not been so generous the words he spoke shortly before his death need never have been uttered. They were: "I have lived keeping an army, I shall die a pauper." But that they were spoken with no tinge of regret I am sure. I possess, I am happy to say, many very intimate things connected with his life. Among them is the first play-bill on which his name ever appeared; the town was Sunderland, the theatre prophetically the Lyceum, the piece

The Lady of Lyons ; I have also his last programme, Henry Irving as Becket at the Theatre Royal, Bradford. I own the chair on which he breathed his last at the Midland Hotel, Bradford, and I bought some hundreds of pounds' worth of his theatrical treasures at the sale of his effects at Christie's. He always said that Phelps was the greatest actor he had ever seen, and that he had modelled himself on him, and that Phelps had had the greatest admiration for Le Blonde, the French pantomimist. An engraving of Le Blonde was in Henry Irving's bedroom among his private collection of Drury Lane and Covent Garden programmes. I prize them as much as I do Edmund Kean's sword, the one he wore as Brutus, which was the property of Henry Irving.

One of his treasures, too, that I naturally value very highly is David Garrick's signet ring, the one he always wore, and which was given to Henry Irving by the great American tragedian, Edwin Booth, when they were playing in *Othello* together at the Lyceum alternating the parts of Iago and the Moor.

The love of J. L. Toole for this great man was that almost of a devoted father, although there were but ten years between them, and Henry Irving, who gave his affection to few people, returned the great little low comedian's to the full.

J. L. Toole was his first real friend. It was Toole who bought him his first dress suit when the tragedian was struggling in the country. It was Johnny Toole who also gave him a set of warm underclothes when, at Christmas time, Henry Irving was playing the dame in a pantomime at Manchester, and it was Toole who recognized his greatness before London did.

These things Henry Irving never forgot, and never for a moment did he waver in his deep affection for the dear genial little man. This marvellous and unselfish friendship of J. L. Toole for him must have been a very great thing in Henry Irving's life, for he was a man who, although not troubling to distrust anyone, despised many and loved few. He was not really a happy man, and in his later years, alas! became a little bitter, for times were changing, and with failing health, he was unable to quite understand a public who were forswearing their allegiance to him and drifting towards lighter forms of entertainment. His knowledge of his art was so immense that his critical faculty forbade him being over-generous to his contemporaries, which perhaps may be only natural, for that he was a Sargent among pavement artists is a thing, I think, that will be readily agreed by all those who saw him in his zenith.

In saying that I know Mr. Toole first recognized the genius of Henry Irving, I also know who it was realized it to the full when, under the Bateman management, he first appeared at the old Lyceum, the portico of which alone remains of that famous theatre as a silent sentinel of its halcyon days. It was Mr. J. M. Levy, father of the late Lord Burnham and founder of the *Daily Telegraph*, whose journal and whose family have always been the truest friends the drama has ever had. Henry Irving had come to town. His mannerisms, which were many and pronounced, had given the unthinking the right, as they imagined, to ridicule the genius which lay behind those minor defects

which are so often allied to greatness. Many laughed, some wondered, few were certain. But Mr. Levy, happening one evening to find himself by chance at the Lyceum watching *The Bells*, left the theatre so deeply impressed with what he had seen, that he made straightway for the *Daily Telegraph* office and delivered himself of the following to Sir John Le Sage, a King of Editors. "Le Sage," he said, "I have seen a great actor at the Lyceum to-night. Please go and write about him. The public must be made to understand that he is a really great actor!" The *Telegraph* championed him and the tide turned.

Both his sons I knew. The elder, Harry, had much of his father's charm and was a distinguished actor. Lawrence, the younger, more of his genius, and, had he lived, undoubtedly would have been an outstanding figure in the life of the theatre to-day.

The fact that Henry Irving had been estranged from both of them, through no fault of his, till only a few years before his death, must have been one of his greatest sorrows, but happily those few years of intimate association with them brought the greatest comfort and joy into the loneliness of his life. He was very fond of my father, both inside and outside the theatre, who I think amused him very much because of his cheery unruffled outlook on life. Father was by nature a happy devil-may-care man, who always spoke as he thought, and therefore, if perhaps not commanding the admiration of genius by his art, did so because of his frankness and attractive honesty. Therefore, Henry Irving never took offence at anything Bill Terriss

did or said. Innumerable are the stories told of my father at the Lyceum, and one which amused everyone at the time was an incident which occurred at the dress rehearsal of the *Corsican Brothers*. Henry Irving always delighted in a dimly lit stage with only limes from many points of vantage, generally focused on himself. His company was so accustomed to being well heard but only half seen that none of them ever resented it, but not so William Terriss, for finding himself nearly in the dark and noticing that his chief had two brilliant moonlight spots full on him, Father stopped in the middle of a very tense scene and shouted to the limelight man on his right : " Here, Jim, not all on the Guv'nor, you know." Henry Irving, I think, loved the audacity of the remark, and laughingly ordered some moonlight to be put on his leading man, saying : " You're quite right, Bill. The planets aren't partial, are they ? "

Henry Irving had also a custom of very wisely cutting all dialogue that seemed in the slightest degree superfluous, the minor characters, however, generally being the sufferers. Rumour has it that one morning, coming a little late to rehearsal, he saw Sir Arthur Pinero, who was an actor in those days, sitting on a piece of profile scenery, and said : " I shouldn't sit there if I were you, my boy ; you'll cut yourself." " Oh ! " said the great author-to-be, " it's quite all right. We're accustomed to having our parts cut in this theatre."

The Irving production of *Henry the Eighth* was by far the most perfect thing I have ever seen in the theatre, for while he himself was colossal as

Wolsey, Miss Terry was superb as Catherine, father as the King, magnificent, and Forbes-Robertson as Buckingham gave an exhibition of saintly repose and glorious diction which will never be equalled, as in a velvet cassock-like garment he journeyed to his death. I could ramble on for ever about the Lyceum and its chief, for I saw all his plays many, many times, but my ink will run drier than my eyes in writing of him, and paper is not so cheap a commodity as it was before the War. There is no homage great enough for English actors to pay to Henry Irving, for as they knew yesterday, so they must never forget in the days to come, it was he who, fighting for them single-handed, broke down the social barrier, making them gentlemen and not the rogues and vagabonds of Charles II.'s reign.

The best life of Henry Irving is that by the late Austin Brereton, but though it abounds in very accurate data, it hardly conveys his personality. Bram Stoker, his trusty manager, also wrote a history of his chief soon after the great man had passed away, and though very readable was not voted all it might have been. Charles Brookfield summed up this work in one sentence, for when asked by a friend what book he was carrying under his arm, the cynic replied: "Oh! only Irving's life of Stoker." This, of course, was quite unfair, but it is true that in the "Life" there were not the little sardonic touches which would have shown the smaller side of the tragedian's nature and which might well have been made part of it, the subject being quite big enough to shoulder them. For instance, in criticism Henry Irving was seldom

generous, and whatever he thought privately, and he must have secretly admired many of that brilliant man's performances, he never in company found anything to praise in Mr. Beerbohm Tree. Indeed, on one occasion when Mr. Tree, hot and perspiring, asked him what he thought of his work that night, he replied smilingly: "Your skin acts well." This I have always thought was manufactured purely to get a laugh in repetition, as was his comment on a horse which was brought to him for inspection. The dealer, after assuring the Lyceum manager that the animal was perfectly quiet and had plenty of experience in facing the footlights, concluded his testimonial by saying: "Sir, you can take my word for it, the horse is perfectly trained, and has been with Mr. Tree in four productions." At this point the horse opened his mouth, appearing to yawn. "Ah! has he?" said Henry Irving. "A bit of a critic too, I see."

It was strange how small things got on his nerves at times, and he became particularly irritated if he thought anyone else was getting too much publicity even if they were in a completely different walk of life. This happened when Nansen, who had just returned from the Arctic regions was the lion of the London season. Mr. Irving kept reading of nothing but Nansen, and it so annoyed him that when one evening Miss Terry ran into his dressing-room and excitedly told him that Nansen was in a box, all he said was: "Nansen! Nansen! Who is he? Oh! ah! yes, I remember. He's the man who stands the cold so well."

CHAPTER XIII

PROPHETS AND RETURNS

AT the end of our *Catch of the Season* tour, Mr. Frohman's agreement with the Messrs. Gatti came to an end. And it was then, I think, that we made the greatest error of our lives. We elected to launch out in a bigger theatre with Mr. Frohman alone. We ought to have stayed at the Vaudeville. We had established a policy there, we had a great following, and given that we had pursued that policy, could have gone on successfully, I think, indefinitely. For policy is the only gilt-edged theatrical security. But no, we, as so many had done before us and many will do again, were out to fly higher. People came to us and said we ought to have a larger house (What a mistake. All the big theatrical money over a period has always been made in small playhouses.)—a theatre of our own, we were told, where we could put on bigger productions. What folly! However, it is always easy to be wise after the event, and, as Byron said, "It's no good crying over spilt milk, it only makes it more watery." We took the fatal step, and not only did we embark

on the building of one theatre but became interested in the building of three—the Aldwych, the Queen's and the Hicks Theatre, now renamed the Globe. Of the finance of these three places, which turned out ultimately anything but places of entertainment for me, I knew little, and I am bound frankly to admit I cared less. The War broke out, all our plans fell to the ground like a pack of cards, owing to banks foreclosing on short mortgages, whatever that means, two of Seymour's partners dying within a fortnight of each other, and the end of the whole thing was that in 1914 he and I, having lost something like forty-seven thousand pounds and being liable for fourteen thousand more, packed up our troubles and set out on a rock-strewn road with little more than a ten-pound note to bless ourselves with. Our house in Berkeley Square, with its furniture and effects, had been sold under the hammer, our life insurance compounded for cash, and thousands of pounds' worth of my jewellery, every bit of it in fact, seized as security. However, that was in 1914. It is now 1928 and all is well, for by dint of colossal work for six years my old man, by writing piece after piece, among which were *The Happy Day* for Daly's Theatre, *Sleeping Partners*, *The Man in Dress Clothes*, *Cash on Delivery*, *Old Bill*, *M.P.* and many others and playing during that period twice nightly in the provinces the plays he had performed only once nightly in London, taking no holidays whatever, succeeded in retrieving our fallen fortunes. I, too, fell into the line of battle, and instead of remaining in London, as I could have done, played sketches through the provinces on

the music halls, where I was able to earn a much larger salary.

I have said I understood little about finance (the people who do I have noticed as a rule seldom laugh as heartily as I can, thank Heaven), but I knew enough to give Seymour one piece of advice, and that was: "Don't go bankrupt whatever you do!" And my counsel was correct. It might have been the easy way out, but it would have been the unwise way if it could possibly be avoided. He heartily agreed, and though it wasn't very pleasant not to play *what* we wanted to, where we wanted to, but *anything*, *anywhere*, so that we might build up the house which had tumbled down, we did so cheerily, with the result that in 1928 we are sailing again happily far from the open sea. This struggle knocked many years out of Seymour's career as an actor, but he is a great optimist and says that the delay has only helped him to equip himself better for the real parts he wants to play. I shall have a double pleasure if he succeeds, for I know what the sacrifice and struggle meant to him.

At the end of *The Catch of the Season* tour we returned to town to open the Aldwych. This was the first of the theatres to be ready of those in which we were interested.

Having no new play, we decided, it being Christmas time, to do an elaborate revival of *Bluebell in Fairyland*. It succeeded excellently, but our expenses were very heavy, and the cost of production eating up the profits, we only marked time from a money point of view, and therefore hurried along the rehearsals of our new venture,

Photo : Foulsham.

As "The Beauty of Bath"

which was a big musical comedy production called *The Beauty of Bath.*

On the opening night of the Aldwych Theatre I may mention that a black cat walked along the footlights just before the curtain rose. Every newspaper in London commented on the fact as a happy omen for the future. I did not know till afterwards that Seymour had trained the cat to do this by having it fed previously every evening for a fortnight at eight o'clock in front of the conductor's chair. He said he had taken the trouble to do it as he thought it would help to start us off well with the audience. It certainly did, for they laughed and applauded for a long time. The Press were very nearly innocent in those days.

It was just as we were commencing at the Aldwych that that little genius Ivy St. Helier came from Jersey to see if she could get an opening on the stage. Seymour, being a fellow islander of hers, saw her, heard her sing and engaged her at once for three years.

A delicious mimic, a wonderful pianist, a droll both on the stage and off it, not only had she an exceptional voice, but as a musician made many hits with her compositions, but better, perhaps, than all these she is a friend with a heart of gold.

The Aldwych was a charming house and beautifully equipped in every way. Mr. Frohman had offices in the building, and from the foyer to the dressing-rooms there was nothing better to be wished for. Above the stage at the top of the theatre we had a large and most delightful supper-room, its walls being covered by mementoes of nearly all the

great people who had made history in our profession. These were as varied as they were sentimentally priceless, for they not only included many personal belongings of Garrick, Colley Cibber, Kean, the Kembles, Mrs. Siddons, Grimaldi, Charles Kean, Henry Irving, Macready, Ellen Terry, Mrs. Kendal, Toole, Charles Wyndham, John Hare, Coquelin, Lucien Guitry, Beerbohm Tree and Sarah Bernhardt, but also the snuff box of Leno, a collar of Fred Leslie's and a memory of Little Tich. The room was panelled in oak and upholstered in green. In it we always had a party of eight or ten people about twice a week after the performance. And if its walls could speak what tales could they not tell? I wish I could remember all the interesting things said by the noted people of the day who honoured those wonderful evenings. I used to sit spell-bound listening to story after story on every conceivable subject from politics to murder trials, but the nights I loved most were the ones when great actors talked of their early struggles and the men who were their masters in art. Their chains of memory were long and spanned the years to the time when Phelps was a young man, and farther back even than that, for Mr. J. B. Howe, of the Irving Company, who died more than thirty years ago at the age of eighty odd years, had actually appeared on the stage with Edmund Kean. Tales I heard of the elder Chatterton and the losing of the original manuscript of *The School for Scandal*. Few people know, I think, that it ever was lost, and that that classic comedy was only set down in writing again from memory by the original London

cast who came to Dublin for its revival, all of them journeying from far and wide to do so.

Many a funny theatrical story, of course, I heard. One I recollect being that told by Herbert Tree about an old actor who was asked to appear in three different parts in the same play. This, it appears, the aged Thespian refused to do. Persuasion, threats of dismissal, a rise of salary, everything was tried, but nothing would move him from his resolve. At last the manager, who was a friend of his, asked him if he had any real reason other than a personal one for not accepting the engagement. "Of course I have, guv'nor," replied the old gentleman. "How can I possibly appear in the three characters you offer me? Two of them fight a duel and the third one has to come in and separate them." His objection was, of course, unanswerable.

One night I heard Coquelin, after discussing Rostand and Cyrano at some length, deplore, as he thought, the lack of imagination so often to be seen on the English stage, and as an illustration he instanced the scene between Hamlet and the Ghost on the battlements. "Think," said the incomparable French actor, "so grave an error as to *show* the Ghost. Surely only a shaft of light should be used to convey the supernatural! And why do English Hamlets," he continued, "rush about in this scene, or, if not doing so, invariably play it with an excess of vitality? That is all wrong. It is a ghost. His father's ghost, the young Prince sees. Hamlet should stand petrified, confronted with something from the grave, and his only gestures, if any, should be made with one hand. The whole

scene should be acted with eyes starting out of the head, and an almost powerless hand, for does not terror make a man impossible of movement?" As he talked he illustrated what he meant by fear, and with his right hand not a span in front of him and his elbow bent into his waist, the great actor, with his face and fingers only, conveyed the *living* transfixed by the *dead*. Whether or no M. Coquelin was right in his contention, it is for the Shakespearean student and not for me to say, but, right or wrong, his conception of "an agony of fear" was masterly beyond words. I have often stood in front of his statue at Boulogne and, remembering his lesson of that night, bowed my head, not indeed to stone, but to the great shaft of light which he himself has left behind.

And, thinking back, how simple all the really great actors I have ever met have always been, and how devoted to and how absorbed in their calling. No greater illustration can be given of the real actor's ruling passion than the story of the two old players who, broken down and weary, walking to another town to fulfil an engagement, were passed by a magnificent carriage with "Dives" inside and a footman next the coachman on the box. "Look," said one, "a carriage and pair, two men on the box and the occupants with everything they want in the world. Isn't it wonderful? Wouldn't you like to change places with them?" "No, I wouldn't," replied the other; "they can't *act!*"

I remember joining in on one occasion and telling our guests a funny story about my father. It was

this : A grocer at Bedford Park once wrote him the following letter :

" Dear Mr. Terriss,

" I should like to come and see you act. Will you kindly send me a box or four stalls ? Thanking you in anticipation,

" I am, yours truly,

" William Ambrose."

Father replied :

" Dear Mr. Ambrose,

" I shall be delighted to give you a box if you will send me three tinned tongues, a dozen pots of jam, a side of bacon and some bags of flour.

" Thanking you, but without the slightest anticipation,

" I am, yours truly,

" William Terriss."

Which everyone agreed was an amusing and very proper reply.

One of Joe Carr's supper anecdotes I remember was of a little boy of tender years who, sleeping in his mother's bedroom, woke up at five in the morning and said : " Mummie, will you tell me a story ? " All the mother said was : " Hush, darling, not now. Your father'll be back very soon and he'll tell us both one."

I saw a great deal of dear old Sir Squire Bancroft about this time, and what a figure he was with his white hair, his tall hat and his eye-glass, which I am sure he never needed—he was so wise. He was the most lovable man in the world, and, at the age of eighty, one of the most up-to-date critics of theatrical doings alive. The British Empire would have gained a great diplomat if he had elected

to place himself as such at its disposal, for he was never known to commit himself definitely about anything, though the lines he wrote were always capable of being read between. Surely nothing more non-committal or devastating was ever said about anything than his guarded criticism of Arthur Bourchier's Macbeth, for when he was asked what he thought of it he looked up to heaven, thought a long time, and then delivered himself of the following: "Parts of it were good, parts of it not so good. What I am wondering is, are the parts that *are* good, good *enough?*"

But he was a kindly and courteous gentleman with a great heart, and I loved him dearly. He was supposed to have made a habit of attending more memorial services than any man of his time, and it was owing to this fact that dear Joe Carr, when he was lying dying at Bournemouth, wrote to Seymour and said: "I fear I must be really very ill, for Bancroft called on me to-day and brought me a bunch of black grapes. Black! That isn't a good sign, is it?"

Once only, I think, Sir George Alexander came to one of our supper parties. I had met him first when I was quite a little girl, during the days of *Faust* at the Lyceum, but although I saw him in later years I never knew him very well. He was always delightful and kind, though, when we did meet, as, indeed, he was to everybody.

Successful as he was, he was never acclaimed a great actor, and it was only after his lamented death, when revivals were made of the pieces he had produced, that those who knew anything about acting

realized how much better he was than they had ever imagined, for the parts to which he gave such charm were sometimes very different ones in the hands of his successors and appeared to be quite second-rate.

If he had only lived he would have been a wonderful head of our profession to-day; at a time when, perhaps, of all other times we most need one, for he was not only dignified but shrewd and far-seeing, and his great business abilities would have organized our calling on a sound commercial basis and made us one of the richest communities in existence, which, unfortunately, is anything but the case in 1928.

One supper party given by us, not at the Aldwych but in our own house, was a memorable one. It was to the Sketch Club, a dozen of their most distinguished members being our guests. I cannot quite remember who they were, but among them was Lance Thackeray, Dudley Hardy, George Hassall, Tom Browne and others equally famous. They did a most charming thing. They brought an empty sketch-book with them and when supper was over they proceeded to illustrate it as if it were a volume for publication. Not only did each of these famous men draw amusing pictures, but even troubled to make thumb-nail sketches as the headings of supposed chapters. It is a priceless little tome, which has become sad to me when I turn its pages, for, alas! so many of the men who drew in it are no more!

I only had the honour of speaking to Sarah Bernhardt once. I was in a box watching her play

L'Aiglon, and she very graciously sent for me to come to see her. I was naturally delighted to do so, but I must confess was very nervous at meeting this, the greatest of tragediennes. When I entered her dressing-room I found her surrounded with at least a dozen people and she, although an old lady, was the most vivacious of the party. Dressed in her white uniform she seemed to me more like a man in her manner than a woman, and I felt I was talking to Henry Irving or Lucien Guitry in his later days. All the Bernhardt charm was there, but the face once so thin and delicate of line and now so massive, awed me greatly. I had, unfortunately, to speak through an interpreter, and on taking my leave of her she most kindly asked me what memento I would like of her, as she knew I had said how proud I should be to possess one. I chose what I felt would be the smallest thing imaginable. I asked for a button off the tunic she was wearing. But no, she looked over her dressing-table and wanted to give me a silver box or anything I cared to choose, but I insisted on having the button as I naturally did not wish to presume on her good nature. She immediately told her maid to cut one of the buttons off. The servant looked daggers at me, but did so. As I took it I slipped a five-pound note into the maid's hand and in a flash the frown became a smile. And this reminded me of a saying of my father's which was: "There is only one card that will get you anything in this world or pass you anywhere. It is made of a little round piece of gold and it has Queen Victoria's face on it."

Nothing more ridiculous I suppose ever happened to anyone than the situation which arose one evening through my not catching the name of a stranger who visited the Aldwych Theatre. After the performance Mr. Greenbaum, a great friend of Mr. Frohman's, came to see us, as he often did, and on this occasion brought with him a most charming Frenchman. There was a band rehearsal after the curtain fell and many of the company remained to rehearse a new song. As our presence was necessary on the stage I asked Mr. Greenbaum if he and his friend would care to sit in the stalls instead of waiting in my room. They said "Certainly," and Seymour and myself took them down with us. As we crossed the stage to get to the pass-door, I, thinking to interest the delightful stranger, explained everything I could to him. I showed him how the lime-lights were used, how the curtain was pulled up and down, and, in fact, was a sort of Cook's guide to a man who seemed delighted to have the most minute details made clear to him. Seymour took him into the stalls and during the rehearsal told him how dances were arranged and actors rehearsed and, in fact, did everything to give a playgoer an insight into work behind the scenes. Nothing could have been more charming than the way on taking his leave Mr. Greenbaum's friend thanked us for having given him such an interesting half hour. When he had gone I said to Seymour: "Do you know the name of Mr. Greenbaum's friend?" "I haven't the faintest idea," said Seymour. "I didn't catch it." A few days afterwards he met Mr. Greenbaum and said:

"Oh! by the way, who was the extraordinarily nice man who seemed so pleased the other night to learn all about the mechanical contrivances at the theatre?" "Oh!" said Mr. Frohman's friend, "didn't you know? That was Lucien Guitry." What we both felt like when we realized the truth was not easy to describe. We had explained to the greatest actor in France things he had been a master of when we were children. For many years he never ceased to laugh about it, for we got to know him very intimately, but always insisted that he had learned a lot, though the knowing twinkle in the Guitry eye made me realize how amused he must have been that night. Ever since this dreadful *faux pas* I have made a habit of listening carefully to names and being very sure who it is I am talking to.

The Beauty of Bath duly made her bow to the public and became their hostess for over a year. The production was a very beautiful one and, as an entertainment, of the very best. The music was by Herbert Haines and the book by Seymour.

All London flocked to the Aldwych, which was very gratifying when one remembers that at this time the whole street was a wilderness, and that the Waldorf Hotel, the Strand Theatre and ours in one block were the only buildings in existence, and all around us nothing but open spaces or half-demolished houses.

During the run of this play the King and Queen of Spain honoured us one night with a visit, and nothing would convince His Majesty that Sydney Farebrother, who gave a wonderful burlesque in

it of Camille Clifford, was not Miss Clifford herself. Standing in the ante-room of the Royal Box I vainly endeavoured to explain to the King that it was not really Miss Clifford, but he wouldn't believe it, saying: "No, I saw her in *The Catch of the Season*. It is Miss Clifford." Seeing that His Majesty was not to be persuaded to the contrary, I smiled and, bowing silently, gave as good an imitation of a courtier as I could; a courtier being a person I understand who lives his life agreeing that the sun is shining when it is pouring with rain.

The Beauty of Bath was followed by even a greater success, which ran for eighteen months, called *The Gay Gordons*. The book was again by Seymour, and the music by Guy Jones, brother of Sydney Jones of Daly's fame.

To deal with bygone plays and players in detail would be as boring as to describe the fashion in dress of 1928 ten years hence, and so I ask those who did not see them to take it from me that their productions were exquisite, and the playing of them perfect.

About this time many charming rivals had sprung up about me. Edna May had taken the town by storm in *The Belle of New York*, Lily Elsie had made London kneel at the feet of *The Merry Widow*, and the star of Gertie Millar shone high in the heavens at my old home, the Gaiety.

Nature, the first Dame of the World's Empire, was in a generous mood in 1910, and showered her gifts ungrudgingly into the laps of many new public favourites, this being, of course, the very best thing that could possibly happen for the

art of the theatre and its financial success. I took a delight in watching these brilliant people capture the town, for I may say, and I say it in no spirit of vanity, that never at any time have I been jealous of anyone. I am more than thankful that I have been blessed with this faculty of appreciation for real merit, and as I realize that there is no virtue in this on my part, it being a gift, I take no credit for it. I have always been very sorry for people who are unable to praise their contemporaries, for I can conceive no greater unhappiness than to look at life through parti-coloured spectacles and spend many an hour trying to fix bolts upon doors, which a younger generation have a perfect right to knock at. To be grateful for what *has* been, and accept age gracefully, is surely the happiest of endeavours.

Brilliant Marie Tempest, who for years had been the crowned queen of light opera, had left Daly's and had commenced her light comedy career. Her success was instantaneous in this totally different work, and she swept all before her. Sweet Letty Lind, beloved by everyone for her gentle and generous nature off the stage and her gaiety and simple charm on it, had gone into retirement. She was a real dear. I remember her once at a luncheon party casually remarking how much she would love to possess a really nice Persian cat. James Davis, the author of *The Gaiety Girl* and many other successes, immediately volunteered to procure the best one possible for her. Letty was overjoyed. She only made one stipulation and this was that the cat should be a tom, as she explained that

she had so many dogs and other pets she didn't want additions to her already large animal establishment. The generous Mr. Davis took note of her wish, and a few days later arrived at Daly's with one of the loveliest Persian tom-cats in the land. We heard afterwards he had paid a hundred pounds for it. Letty Lind was overjoyed and took her pet home in triumph. But there was a sequel to the story. To her dismay six months later her tom-cat had kittens. The donor was wired to and informed of the catastrophe. He, of course, was furious and dashed off in a cab to the fancier who had deceived him. After a few preliminary remarks James finished up by asking the man what he was going to do about it. "What have you got to say?" inquired Letty's friend. "You're a thief. You charged me a hundred pounds for a tom-cat and it has had kittens. What have you to say?" "What have I to say?" said the quite unruffled dealer. "What have I to say? Only this: bring it back and I'll give you two hundred pounds for it. A tom-cat that can have kittens! Why, it's the living wonder of the world!"

CHAPTER XIV

CHANGING DAYS BRING CHANGING WAYS

A GREAT change was coming over the kingdom of entertainment about this time. The era of building more modern theatres had commenced and new musical comedy managements besides our own were springing into being.

Up till now Mr. George Edwardes at Daly's and the Gaiety, and occasionally at the Prince of Wales Theatre, had been in almost undisputed possession of light musical work, and had under his contract all the most successful people who played in it. The American invasion was for the first time just beginning to make itself felt, for Mr. Charles Frohman, having extended his activities right and left, his countrymen watching his progress, began to realize the possibilities of London. The Music Halls also were commencing to cast off the old love for the new. No longer were they the home only of the single star turn, but elaborate small productions were becoming the fashion in the palatial buildings which were rising on the sites so long occupied by the small houses; and so, looking back at the first half dozen years of the

present century, one is conscious that these were the years in which took place a real and first great move in London's Theatre-land. Happily that welcome guest "Charm" had come to stay on a permanent visit, garishness had received her *congé*, and vulgarity was relegated for ever to the place it should never have left.

A war of competition had commenced in earnest. Monopoly was fighting for its existence, and so a difficult situation for the established amusement caterers had arisen which was all for the good of the theatre, the artists, and the public.

When *The Gay Gordons* had been running to full houses for fifteen months the Hicks Theatre was ready for us to go into, and so we opened it by taking the Aldwych Theatre company and the whole production up to Shaftesbury Avenue. Knowing, of course, that we should soon be nearing the end of a very successful run, we set about getting ready a musical version of *The Court Scandal*, a play made famous by Madame Dajazet in Paris in the 'seventies (who, by the way, was so youthful looking that at the age of seventy she played her own daughter's daughter in a piece), which we called *The Little Duke*. The book, which was perfectly delightful, being a story of the Louis-Quatorze period, was set to music by Frank Tours. His music was graceful, of the time, and in every way was bright and charming. The production was perhaps, with the exception of *Sans Gêne*, the most lovely London had seen in this class of work up till that time, and I doubt for taste if it has ever been surpassed.

However, notwithstanding the care and money lavished upon it, it did not succeed as it deserved. I played the little Duc de Richelieu and had the part of my life. The notices were splendid, and yet, as I say, commercially the undertaking was disappointing.

During the building of the Hicks Theatre, or rather, when the old houses on which it now stands as the Globe were being demolished, two most curious relics of bygone days were found in an oak-panelled room. They were the mummified skeletons of a cat and a mouse. Each was quite perfect in shape and was found wedged in the wainscoting of the apartment. The mouse was some four inches in front of the cat, and what must have obviously happened was that the cat had made a dash after the little animal, which had rushed for safety into an unknown corner and they both got jammed, and so died. Probably a hundred and fifty years had passed since their race to death, and they were solid stone. I often wonder if this cat brought us bad luck. Cats have never been lucky to me.

I think I am right in saying that Mr. Edwardes lost twenty thousand pounds with *Sans Gêne*, and I know the loss on *The Little Duke* was about thirteen thousand pounds. It is inexplicable how such exquisite productions could have met with such disaster. Of course, it must not be forgotten that in each case the cost of presenting them to the public was enormous. That of *The Little Duke* was well over ten thousand pounds, which to-day would be roughly equivalent to nearly double the amount for buying purposes in the theatre.

Photo : Foulsham.

As the Duc de Richelieu in "The Little Duke,"
at the Hicks Theatre

One of our dearest friends, Sir Guy Laking, superintended the historical detail and loaned us genuine furniture and ornaments of the period, which were insured for fifteen thousand pounds, so some idea may be gathered of how really beautifully everything was done.

This failure was a great blow, as the financial storm to which I have referred earlier in these pages was beginning to gather overhead. Unknown to us at this time, dear Mr. Frohman was also getting out of his depth and, indeed, as we learned afterwards, must have been worried beyond measure for money, although he never disclosed the fact to a living soul, and no one, I think, had the faintest idea of his troubles, for he was the bravest man imaginable.

Not only were his English ventures unprofitable, but things had become very difficult for him in America, interested as he was not only in his own productions but also in the policy of a chain of theatres numbering upwards of one hundred and thirty.

I don't think anyone has ever accused Seymour of being a good business man, but, strange to relate, I am sure Mr. Frohman was very little better. He certainly never considered the details of finance in this country whatever he did in his own. This neglect on his part must have cost him thousands. It wasn't that he couldn't have grappled with detail—it was just that what he considered the smaller side of great undertakings bothered him, and he left them to subordinates.

He had a Napoleonic mind and looked over

territories with their big cities as his objective, and never troubled about the ways and means so long as they capitulated to him.

From first to last, I understood, his London enterprises cost him, even with his many successes, very nearly thirty thousand pounds a year over a very long period.

One of the saddest meetings I had with Mr. Frohman was when I visited him in New York for the last time, not because I dreamed for a moment it was to be the last time I should ever see this great-hearted little man, but I called on him at his offices in the Empire Theatre to find him greatly changed. The same old smile perhaps was there, but the joy had gone out of his laughter. It was no longer the Charles Frohman I had known, vital, alert and eager to face anything. It was a monarch on the eve of abdication, deserted by the majority of his courtiers and with only echoes of the past filling the empty rooms in which he sat, alone.

When I had been accustomed to visit him in these very offices years before, it was with the greatest difficulty one could pick one's way through the crowd of authors, actors and managers, who were either keeping an appointment or begging for one. Clerks hurried to and fro, typists were to be heard beating their machines with almost savage haste, and orders were given to aides-de-camp who disappeared to see they were executed, orders affecting men and things at places as far apart as are Vancouver and London.

But now what a change I saw. The corridor leading to the ante-room was empty, the ante-room

itself was occupied only by a little page-boy who had the detached air of someone with little to do.

And conscious of all this, for he was a man of the most sensitive nature, C.F., as he was called by everyone, welcomed me with a half-wistful look, afraid, I think, to read my thoughts. I am glad I saw a great deal of him during my brief holiday visit to New York, for Seymour and myself dined with him several times and laughed over many little bygone happenings which are precious things to old friends.

He was warned anonymously not to sail on the *Lusitania*, but to a nature like his, this was the last thing which would have made him cancel his passage.

He told me he paid his first visit to London as a programme boy with Haverley's Minstrels at the old Her Majesty's Theatre. He visited England afterwards every year as the most beloved and respected of American impresarios who ever came to our shores, and it was towards London he was journeying when one of the most dastardly acts of the War cost him his life.

His nearest and dearest friend, Charles Dillingham, now the celebrated American manager, in good times and bad was ever at his side, and must have brought an overload of sunshine into his life when most he needed it. For he was a man after Charles Frohman's own heart, shrewd, witty, generous to a fault, and with an understanding of men and women in our profession which few have ever possessed. I remember once saying to him: "How did you first succeed with Mr. Frohman?"

and he replied: "I always brought him good news!" and instanced his remark by recalling the great theatre fire at Chicago. Mr. Frohman not only had an entire production burned in the catastrophe, but being interested in the building itself, it looked at one moment as though the next-of-kin of all those who had lost their lives, and there were many, might sue for compensation. Had they succeeded a bank would hardly have been able to stand up against the colossal sum involved, let alone an individual.

Mr. Frohman was naturally weighed down by the threatened debacle, and no one, as Charles Dillingham told me, seemed to do anything but come to the little man with tales of woe. When towards the end of a desperate day the last of the Solomon Eagles had taken his departure, my friend Charlie entered C.F.'s room, happy and smiling. His manager looked at him blankly, and then proceeded to tell him of what had and what might happen, "and, Ella," Charlie Dillingham said to me, "instead of joining in with the chorus of woe, I assured him that nothing was simpler than to get another production duplicated in a week (which we did), and that the idea of his being come down upon for compensation from the relatives of those who had perished in the fire was a joke. In an instant Charles Frohman was himself again, and at once took train to his country house at White Plains, where he knew he would get peace and rest for twenty-four hours. And then, my dear," Charles continued, "one of those strange things happened which always happen in connection with great

tragedies. We arrived at the gates of C.F.'s house and were met by the gardener, looking the picture of misery. 'What on earth's the matter?' asked Mr. Frohman. 'Oh! a dreadful thing has happened, sir,' said the man. 'It's dreadful!' 'Good heavens, tell me, what is it?' asked C.F. anxiously, fearing that there was more bad news from New York. 'Well, sir,' answered the gardener, 'I didn't expect you till next Sunday and the first lot of new peas won't be ready for picking for your dinner to-night.' You should have seen the look of relief on C.F.'s face. One man in despair over a hecatomb, the other in the depths of the same emotion over a dish of peas."

But Mr. Frohman, I am sure, found time to sympathize with his servant. He understood human nature and found time for anyone in trouble.

I was introduced by Mr. Frohman to his greatest star, Miss Maud Adams. Her position with the American public was unique. It had placed her on as high a pedestal as an artist and a woman as even her manager had. She was the most attractive actress imaginable, of indescribable charm and gentleness, and reminded me much of Ellen Terry in her method and personality. I often regret that she never appeared in London, and I remember saying to Mr. Frohman: "Why don't you bring Miss Adams to England. She's wonderful!" and he answered: "Oh! yes, Ella, we all know she's wonderful, but what has she to gain by coming here. She is the greatest draw in America. Her position there is unchallenged. Supposing she didn't make quite as great a success in this country as

she has in her own, it would only worry her. And if she made the greatest success, which I am sure she would, it wouldn't make her any greater, for you see to be loved by a hundred and odd million people is quite enough. Don't you think so ? " Perhaps he was right, but her absence from London has always been one of my professional regrets.

The Little Duke finished its run at the Hicks Theatre, and I went on a tour with it to all the big cities. We played to crowded houses and retrieved some of the losses of its London season.

At the end of the tour came an offer from the then Mr. Alfred Butt for Seymour and myself to go to the Palace Music Hall. At first we were advised by everyone that this would be our death-knell, but Paul Rubens, who was a very shrewd judge of theatrical matters, didn't think so at all, and volunteered to write us a little musical play, which he did, and we accepted the proffered engagement. The little play was called *The Fly by Night*. The scene was laid on the top of a house in London where a dance was in progress, and during the festivities an airman landed with his machine among the chimney pots and found the girl he fell in love with among the beautiful ladies who came up through a skylight to see him when he crashed. This was the first time an aeroplane was used on the stage. The little piece served its purpose, but was not an epoch-making success. Then came an offer from Mr. Stoll for us to go and play in comedy duologues at the Coliseum, and not only at this favourite place of entertainment, but also

at all the great halls in the kingdom. This offer, of course, which was made us through Mr. Eric Wollheim, who has been our valued friend ever since, and on whose judgment we always rely very much indeed, called for grave consideration. Everyone advised us not to dream of taking it. How glad I am we didn't listen to them. Still, I quite appreciated their fears for our future, as up till this time no one of any importance (this sounds a most conceited way of putting it, but it is not meant to be so for a moment)—so shall I say, " no so-termed West End stars " had played on a Variety Bill. Nearly all our contemporary leading actors and actresses threw up their hands in horror when they heard we had decided to appear, as they put it, with acrobats, red-nosed comedians, performing monkeys and serio-comic ladies. But we added up the situation, I think, very wisely. The monetary inducement was great. Mr. Frohman and ourselves were in difficulties both in the finding of plays and through heavy financial losses, and there was every reason to accept a certainty and avoid the further risk of productions, for the time being. Besides, the smartest audiences were to be seen at the Coliseum, and the fact that we were to play in company with a new set of artists with whom hitherto we had never been associated seemed to offer no very good reason for hesitating to break new ground. How right we were in doing so was proved by the fact that there was hardly an actor or actress of any standing who did not later follow our example, not all, I am bound to say, successfully, for many of

them took little trouble, looking upon the Music Halls as something very easy and assuming a what-we-choose-to-give-them-will-do sort of attitude towards them. Never, however, did they make a greater mistake. Of all the places in the world the Music Hall is the most difficult for the actor to succeed in. In the first place, he has to follow turn after turn, many of them of superlative excellence and very few of them bad, and appear before an audience accustomed to variety, impatient of delay and quick to realize in the first few minutes if what they are watching is pleasing them. From the first time I appeared on the Music Hall stage till now I have never ceased to have the greatest admiration for even the ordinary turns who appear on it, for to hold a great audience single-handed in front of a drop scene, either by singing a song, doing a dance, or performing conjuring tricks, or whatever it may be, calls for something exceptional in the artist. However, to become technical is to become as great a bore as to be chronologically correct, as no sensible person cares a fig for dates, and therefore I will only concern myself with those personal experiences of my own which may seem of interest.

I found the Coliseum audiences wonderful, and I had great experience of them, as I not only played in comedies, but I sang songs by myself and also appeared as Joan of Arc in a very elaborate production, written by Henry Hamilton. The *mise en scène* was perfect, Guy Laking again being responsible for the historical accuracy, and superintending everything from the tabards to the

pauldrons of my armour. Mary Glynne played Joan's little sister; a sweet little mite she was of eleven, and now she is a leading actress with a child of her own aged ten. I can hardly believe it.

Seymour's production of the play was a very fine one. The big crowds were handled beautifully, and the scene at the stake was one I shall never forget, for as I disappeared through the burning faggots angels rose bearing heavenwards the soul of the peasant saint who had given her life for France. The effect was magical.

I was very happy in my many engagements under Sir Oswald Stoll's management. The Coliseum is a beautifully run house and his lieutenants as able as anywhere in the world. I cannot remember anything out of the ordinary happening to me at the Coliseum except when Mr. Lafayette the illusionist's lion broke loose from its cage, and also when an awkward mistake occurred at a performance organized to commemorate the Charles Dickens Centenary. What happened on the former occasion might have been attended with very serious results. Luckily it was not.

Oh ! and I do remember one humorous happening in the shape of a speech made by one of the stage assistants on the night that poor Margaret Cooper and myself were within a few inches of being killed. She and I were standing chatting with our backs to the curtain, her turn being just over and my songs about to begin, when suddenly hearing a crash overhead, we were only just in time to jump backwards and escape the front row of lights, which

came thundering down on to the stage on the spot where a moment before we had been standing. An electric batten is a thing of very great weight, hung by chains to the flies. One of these chains had given way, and, unable to bear the strain, one of the others had snapped also. Realizing that only by the greatest good luck we had escaped a terrible accident, if not worse, we both looked at each other unable to speak. Indeed, I felt like doing anything rather than trip on before an audience to sing comedy songs, but there is always an unconscious humorist at hand at these times to restore one's equilibrium, and, thank goodness, one was provided that night in the shape of the afore-mentioned assistant, who went before the curtain and addressed the house in these words : " Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Terriss will not appear for five minutes as there has been a slight accident. With your permission, the band will play during the interval." When we heard the words " slight accident," which represented a ton and a half of iron swinging backwards and forwards, and the fact that we were not being carried to Charing Cross hospital by only a matter of a few inches, the words " slight accident " were Heaven-sent, and enabled me five minutes later to dance on to the stage, I won't say happily but at any rate not nervously.

In mentioning the night Mr. Lafayette the illusionist's lion got out of its cage, for a time the theatre, both in front and behind the curtain, was, to say the least of it, in a state of nervous tension. The first I knew of what had happened was from Seymour, who knocked loudly at my door and

shouted : " Don't come out of your dressing-room till I tell you to. There's a lion loose in the theatre and they can't find it." This was a little nerve-wracking, as, with wifely pride perhaps, I may be forgiven for thinking that my partner might have made an attractive meal. However, I did what I was told, and an hour later came down to hear that all was well. It appears that the animal, which was kept in a cage covered by a tarpaulin, had loosened the bars and finding itself free had begun to roam about among the scenery at the back. Andrieff's band at the time was playing " The Volga Boat Song," and the animal, getting tired of wandering about in the dark, came down to the prompt corner and, stalking to the footlights, surveyed the musicians. Monsieur Andrieff, who always stood with his back to the audience, didn't see that, within a few yards of him, a King of the Forest was eyeing him critically ; but the members of his orchestra, who were all facing the house, became panic-stricken, and, dropping their instruments, disappeared from view like greased lightning. I believe this is the proper phrase. M. Andrieff was not long in discovering the cause of the Russian retreat, and very wisely followed his men, like lightning that was even more greased, and when the lion walked solemnly towards the boxes opposite him the occupants rushed out, and the front rows of the stalls also began to think of moving. The animal, however, turned its attention from the audience, probably thinking the artists more attractive, when the stage manager, with wise promptness, rang down the iron curtain. The excitement

behind then commenced. The lion disappeared, everyone on the stage took cover, and several amusing things happened before the animal was brought to bay with iron bars and forced back to his living apartment.

One of the theatre cleaners, who on her hands and knees was scrubbing out a dressing-room, knowing nothing of what had happened, looked up to see the great brute in the doorway within two yards of her. Thinking that it was an acrobat dressed up for a comic performance, all she said was: "Go away, go away! Can't you see I'm busy." And, strange to relate, the lion moved off to where two stage hands were standing. They had their backs to it, and as one was saying in anxious tones, "I wonder where he is now, Bill!" the other turned to see a shaggy mane within patting distance and perilously near his friend's trousers. With a shout they fled, but the lion didn't follow. The fact being that, although advertised as an untamed forest-bred animal, it was in reality the most docile creature imaginable, having neither claws nor teeth. Of course these facts only came out afterwards. Some weeks later the theatre in Edinburgh in which Lafayette was performing with this same animal caught fire. It is supposed that a wire fused which was attached to a metal plate inside the lion's cage, from which the poor thing was given a slight shock when it was required to roar. Whether this was so or not, I believe was never really ascertained, but, in any case, during the performance the scenery caught light and caused Mr. Lafayette's death. He remained, I heard,

to try and save a favourite horse and was trapped by the flames. A most extraordinary thing happened in connection with this tragedy. An assistant who performed as Lafayette's double, and who was dressed exactly like him, also lost his life, and his remains, being mistaken for Lafayette himself, would have been buried in his place had not, during the removal of a pile of debris, the real Lafayette been found shut in a stage trap through which he had fallen.

His sad end shocked the public very much—Mr. Lafayette was an excellent showman and a quiet, courteous little man in public life. Performing, as he did, as an illusionist, the finding of his double instead of himself made the tragedy, if possible, more gruesome.

At the Charles Dickens performance, which realized some thousands of pounds, organized by Seymour for the *Daily Telegraph* in conjunction with Sir Oswald Stoll, I, through no fault of my own, succeeded in slightly upsetting some of the wonderful tableaux of Dickens' works, which were most elaborately arranged and performed by all the leading actors and actresses in London.

Standing in a subdued light dressed in flowing white draperies with a golden wreath upon my head, it was arranged that I should read excerpts from all the most celebrated and best known scenes in Dickens' immortal stories, and as I did so the characters were shown illustrating the text. All went well till half-way through, when unknown to me, my back being to the tableaux, I was reading of one thing and the pictures were showing another.

What had happened was that a page had been lost from my volume, and consequently every group of people appeared in their wrong order. Quite unconscious of what was happening I read on, sublimely ignorant of the fact that when I said: "And then Little Nell and her dear old grandfather, who," etc., etc., etc., the picture showing behind me was not Little Nell at all, but that of ferocious Bill Sikes striking Nancy. And as I read the death of Tiny Tim the illumination at the back depicted Fagin and the Artful Dodger, and so on and so on.

Had the occasion not been almost, one may say, a sacred one, laughter would have reigned supreme, but the whole thing was so beautifully conceived and so well carried out that the audience, thank Heaven, less concerned with the text than with the pictures set before their eyes, applauded vigorously. Had I known what was really happening I should have had panic, and I was thankful that it wasn't until the curtain fell that I learned the truth. At first some of the actors thought that it was an elaborate joke of Seymour's. I need hardly say it was nothing of the kind, as he had taken infinite pains with many helpers for weeks to make the whole evening the tremendous success it turned out to be.

During my engagement on the Music Halls I visited all the principal cities in the kingdom, and found the audiences enthusiastic to a degree. I had been warned that my methods were too simple for the Halls and that I should be well advised to broaden them. This I did not attempt to do, for

I well knew that it was no use trying to sell artichokes, having made my name as a grower of asparagus. I did my work exactly as I had always done it, and found that the great audiences I played for demanded nothing in any way different. Indeed, I have always found that nearly all audiences everywhere are exactly the same. They either like a thing or they don't, and the fact of attempting to shout something which should be whispered is the worst possible policy, for in underrating their intelligence you are doing what is worse, you are losing faith in yourself.

The Music Halls are a great training for any actor or actress; it gives them breadth of style, great confidence, and infinite resource.

Of the many wonderful people I met on the Halls, and there were many, Miss Marie Lloyd stood out head and shoulders among her feminine contemporaries. What the late Lady Bancroft could do with a comedy line Marie Lloyd did with a song. Indeed, with a world of meaning in a look, she had the genius to give a monosyllable six different meanings. In fact, on paper she must have been impossible to censor. Her heart was as great as her talent, and money, except to give to others, meant nothing to her.

Cinquevalli, of course, had no equal. Many perhaps have performed his tricks, but his elegance and ease and the certainty and apparent simplicity with which he juggled either a feather or a cannon-ball made him a delight to watch.

My greatest favourite, I think, was the inimitable Grock, and I never failed to see his performance

whenever I had the good fortune to be on a bill with him.

I remember one night talking to an English low comedian who sang comic songs. He was explaining to me what great difficulty he had in obtaining work and put it down to the fact that he was British-born. "They never give you a chance in this country, Miss Terriss," he said, "unless you're a foreigner. Call yourself Mr. and they won't look at you. To tell you the truth, I'm seriously thinking of putting 'Mons.' or 'Sig.' before my name."

It was while I was at the Chiswick Empire that I heard of a very funny conversation which took place between two comedians who were dressing together. One came in and, being full of trouble, was endeavouring to enlist his friend's sympathy. "My luck's been awful," he said. "I went racing yesterday and lost all my money. Last Monday my wife got influenza, my youngest boy has got jaundice, I buried my mother-in-law on Tuesday, our house caught fire in the spring and I wasn't insured, and now the doctor says he thinks I am developing curvature of the spine. What about that for luck?" "Oh!" said his companion, "it's not as bad as what's happened to me. I've been barred playing on the Stoll tour!"

This, I may mention, is a much coveted engagement.

It's strange how we all live in a little world of our own and imagine that it is impossible for people in another profession not to know those whose names are household words to ourselves. This is best illustrated, I think, by two artists up at Newcastle,

Photo : Corbett.

As Joan in "Joan of Arc"

who, having finished their "act," were watching from the wings Irene Vanbrugh playing in *The Twelve Pound Look*. The comedy sketch in which they had just appeared was amusing, but of the rough-and-tumble kind devoted to custard pies and falling off ladders. They stood in the prompt corner enthralled at her acting and the little play. When it was over one turned to the other and said: "Who did you say wrote it, Bill?" "Barrie—a man called J. M. Barrie, it says on the programme," his partner replied. "Did he?" said the first one. "Did he? Then he writes our next."

While I was playing with my brother-in-law, Stanley Brett, and Seymour was playing with Gladys Cooper at the Coliseum and in the big provincial music halls, an offer came of eight hundred pounds a week for us both to go to appear in Vaudeville in Africa for four months, so we decided to join forces again and take the trip. It was a wonderful experience and I have always looked forward to returning to that delightful country. Its climate is the finest in the world, the hospitality of its people beyond words, and who as playgoers are more than generous. My only regret about this visit was that I should have much preferred to have appeared in our full plays at the theatre instead of in the little half-hour sketches which "Variety" demanded.

However, we have many plays to take there now, and, all being well, we shall, I hope, visit this land of happy memories in the near future.

On our return to England we produced at Wyndham's Theatre, in conjunction with the late Frank Curzon, a musical version of *The Dictator*,

Richard Harding Davis' amusing farce. It was called *Captain Kidd*. The music was by Leslie Stuart, but, although it was tuneful and of his best, his style was not suited to rapid farce, and the piece fell between two stools. The slow lilting melodies stopped the fun, and the elaborate plot was one to which a big musical setting should never have been wedded.

It was about this time that the brilliant Mr. H. V. Higgins, for whom I have the deepest affection, became our counsellor and devoted friend. With all his many interests, which included the running of the Covent Garden Opera House, where he had reigned for over twenty years, he found leisure to advise us and steer our course in all our undertakings.

I wonder if any man living to-day has so many amusing things to his credit. His epigrams would fill a volume, while his judgments, which must be a heritage from Solomon, are for ever given in words that are shafts of wit shot from a bow of the greatest understanding.

To attempt to recall a hundredth part of the humorous things of his for which London has been grateful would be impossible, but, thinking at random, I recall one or two stories typical of him for the benefit of those who do not know them and which should never be lost.

At a luncheon party given not so very long ago a crashing bore very high up in the Air Force Command was holding forth at great length on technical detail which no one present understood, or wanted to. He droned on, listening to himself with the greatest pleasure, quite oblivious of the

fact that drooping eyelids and nodding heads were to be seen all round the table. At last his harangue seemed to have come to an end. But not a bit of it. He began to enlarge on the personnel under his command. This looked like being a very long affair, and was only cut short by Harry Higgins (as he is known to the world in general and everyone in particular), who settled him completely. The dull general had restarted his mental traction engine by saying : " Now there are two sorts of officers in the Flying Corps." " We know there are," said H. H. " Respondents and co-respondents," and amidst the laughter that followed, the entire company were enabled to dive into the intricacies of tennis and the divorce court.

My friend has saved more happy gatherings from that devastating dullard, the teller of lengthy anecdotes, than it is possible to conceive. Once I was present when a gentleman who had recently returned from Kenya Colony was launching a gas attack on all and sundry concerning his extremely ordinary exploits while shooting big game. One story followed another till the waiters almost screamed, and his last effort might have run into three serials had he not been nipped by my witty friend in the preface, as it were. The disciple of Selous began : " The sun was extremely hot and I found myself standing in a clearing all alone. Suddenly a roaring lion dashed into the open and my predicament was a most unpleasant one, for there seemed little chance of escape. Imagine it," he continued, " a roaring lion in front of me and no means of retreat, for I had a yawning chasm behind

me. Think of it! a yawning chasm!" "Yes," said Harry Higgins, "it must have been a bit trying, but are you sure that the chasm was yawning as much before you arrived?"

Everyone knows the story of Sir James Barrie, who, when asked to settle a dispute as to how a well-known actor should be advertised, the gentleman objecting to his name being in the same size print as the other members of the company, said, "Well, it's rather difficult to know what to do. Have you got any alternative to increasing the size of the lettering?" "Yes," said the manager, "I thought of putting 'and' before his name." "No," said Sir James quietly, "I think 'but' would be better."

And remembering this little anecdote reminds me of Harry Higgins' remark when he was urged to put "and" before the name of a very ordinary artist. His monumental reply was: "Why put the 'and' where the 'art' can never be?"

My old man has said a few amusing things in his time, though of course it is not for me to mention the fact, but he made me laugh the other evening when we were watching the turmoil on the stage in Mr. Alfred Mason's exciting play, *The House of the Arrow*. At the end of the third act when one of the characters entered with a knife in his chest, I said, "How do you like it?" He replied, "Well, if this is the House of Arrow, I shall send my boy to Eton."

That night a famous contralto was in an opposite box and I happened to say how I loved hearing her sing "Abide with me." Seymour answered, "Yes, so do I, but I like the song her husband sings

better." "What is that?" I asked. "I've got to," said my light comedian.

I pass over the next season or two, my time being mostly occupied by continual returns to the Coliseum or touring with Seymour in old successes.

In 1912, however, we produced *Broadway Jones*, by G. M. Cohan, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. We had seen it at a big popular house in New York, and finding that the Prince of Wales's was not by any means the best theatre to suit its broad fun, we arranged after a short run there to take it to the Lyceum Theatre. This was one of the wisest moves we ever made.

It was with some misgivings, I think, that the Messrs. Melville altered their policy and allowed farce to be played at their theatre for the first time, and I think they were as surprised as we were at the extraordinary welcome *Broadway Jones* met with at their house. Not only did their own regular audience yell with laughter at this most amusing play, but the Bond Street patrons of the Drama who had held aloof from the Prince of Wales's flocked to the Lyceum and laughed as heartily as the great good-natured crowd who frequent this popular place of entertainment.

I remember the late Duke of Rutland saying to me one night at the Lyceum: "*Broadway Jones* is splendid. I saw it at the Prince of Wales's and didn't care for it very much, but now that you've altered it it is one of the funniest pieces I have ever seen." He seemed very surprised when I told him not a single line had been changed, and he couldn't realize that it was the audience which was different,

not the play. Where a Mayfair minority had giggled, the "great public" roared. Where feather fans had gently tapped programmes, ungloved hands applauded vigorously, the result being that those who came from Park Lane to the middle West forgot in their enjoyment not to be human beings.

The play ran for weeks to crowded houses. This was in 1912, and the piece has been running in the provinces without interruption for fourteen years.

I appeared in *Broadway Jones* in all the great cities on its first provincial tour, and then came THE WAR!

CHAPTER XV

1914!

EVEN to think of this dreadful nightmare is painful—to write about it, except in connection with my profession, impossible, for its victories must for ever be seen through a shroud of sorrow and the years can never make its terrors for me less dim.

On the Fourth of August, 1914, I was lying in a nursing home too weak after an operation to understand what that terrible day was to mean for our country. Two months later I found myself in the world again, a world that understood only too well. One of my brothers-in-law, who had previously been in the 13th Hussars, had of course rejoined the army again, and my other one, the actor, Stanley, was about to do so. Seymour, who was forty-five, was laughed at by those responsible for recruiting, and much to his distress was told he was an old man and to "get on with his own job." Can I truthfully say that his distress was mine? No, I can't, though in common with my countrywomen I should not have complained, and would have been the first to have agreed with his going.

"Getting on with your own job!" Yes, of course, this was the thing, and I set about doing my

little best, which was not any more (or any less, I hope) than that undertaken by my many comrades.

There was hospital work, matinées to be got up, for the less seriously wounded and the convalescent. There were bazaars to organize, working parties to be arranged, recruiting songs to sing—all very small affairs compared to the great struggle itself, but though we all knew them to be little, still we felt that they were part of the great machine, and being " our own particular job," we were proud of them.

At night time I was playing in *The Earl and the Girl* at the Lyric Theatre. Hospital blue gradually became the dominant colour in the house; in fact, at the matinées there was little else. It was a heart-breaking business, and one evening after the curtain had fallen Seymour and I sat discussing our programme for the next day, and who would be coming to help us at a concert. I suddenly said, " Why not get up a party to go to France and try to amuse the troops at Christmas time? " It, no doubt, was a very obvious thing to think of, but no one had up to that moment suggested it. How was it to be done? To put such a proposal before the authorities without great influence seemed almost an impossibility. Song and dance didn't seem to fit in with the mighty difficulties of men and guns, and casting about in our minds for someone powerful enough to open the door of the War Office so that we could be certain of a sympathetic hearing, we decided that Lord Burnham was the personage to help us. How right we were. Seymour went straight down to the *Daily Telegraph* office in the morning and explained our project to my father's old friend. He listened

attentively and in five minutes had made up his wise mind. "It's a fine idea," he said. "Here is a letter to Lord Kitchener. Go to the War Office, see Sir George Arthurs and he will, I am certain, do all he can to help you." Then suddenly he said: "Who is going to pay for all this?" Enthusiasm had eliminated finance. The money part of the enterprise had not been considered and he was told so. "Very well, then," said this most splendid of old gentlemen, "I'll pay half of whatever it costs. Run along and let me know what happens." His letter was an Open Sesame. At first I don't think, from the questions which we were called upon to answer, any such thing as entertainment for the soldiers in the War zone had entered the heads of those who were directing operations. Indeed, Lord Kitchener, after inquiring when we wanted to start, and being told on Xmas Eve, asked if we thought the British Army was going to stop fighting on Xmas Day? But, that it was soon realized how necessary amusement was for the brave men who were physically and mentally suffering from the strain of battle, soon became evident, for Seymour was told to wire direct to Lord French, saying that Lord Kitchener had given his consent and did he approve. The following telegram was Lord French's reply:

"I thank you for your kind offer in your telegram thirteenth, but owing to the constant and unremitting attention necessitated by operations regret I cannot avail myself of it as regards the troops at the Front. It would, however, be a great boon to those in hospitals and camps on line of communication at places such as Havre, Rouen,

Abbeville, Boulogne, and the Army in France are deeply indebted to the ladies and gentlemen who have so kindly offered their services. If you communicate with General Maxwell, I.G.C., Abbeville, he will arrange details and has been informed. If a lull in the operations at the time of your visit should give me the opportunity of attending a performance at one of the places mentioned I shall not fail to do so.

"FRENCH. G.H.Q."

Lord Burnham was as delighted as we were, and we at once set to work to organize the expedition. We had to provide not only our own transport, but, in fact, everything, the military authorities very reasonably explaining that while they would help us in every way possible they could take no responsibility or make any arrangements for us. With a mighty struggle in progress we naturally expected nothing but their permission to proceed to the Front, and having obtained it we were grateful and happy.

The first step was to select the company. The first person I asked was Gladys Cooper. She was playing with Seymour at the time and jumped at the idea, ready to help in any way whatever. This was a grand start—we had the most beautiful woman in England coming with us. Then I wired to dear Ben Davies. He replied: "When you like —How you like—Anything you like." This was wonderful. Now we wanted a comedy lady at the piano, and little Ivy St. Helier was so eager when I spoke to her that I think she would have gone ahead of us if she could have got there. I then thought of someone whom the soldiers knew and loved—Willie Frame. Would the great Scottish comic singer come? I hardly dared ask him.

It is true he was strong and virile, but he was close on seventy years of age. However, I did ask him, and his merry old face lit up with the fire of a young Galahad. He said it would be the greatest thing in his life to be allowed to join us. As a first-class musical turn the greatest success in 1915 was that of Eli, Olga and Elgar Hudson. In an instant they said "Yes." Alas! two of that famous trio are no more, Eli Hudson dying in khaki towards the end of the War. As a really funny comedy turn I asked Will Van Allen, whom I had met several times in the Music Halls, and who had always convulsed his audiences with laughter, and he willingly agreed.

This was indeed a splendid bill. Everyone connected with the expedition gladly cancelled their existing engagements for a fortnight, as a humble tribute to the men who were fighting for them. Here is our programme, which was sent from Boulogne to G.H.Q. in thousands.

Flags of the Allies.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE AT
"THE FRONT."

A Tent A Roadside
A Hospital Anywhere.

SOLDIERS, fellow countrymen of whom we are so proud and to whom we owe so much.

By permission of
FIELD-MARSHAL EARL KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, O.M., G.C.S.I., etc.,
Secretary of State for War,

And with the approval of
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, O.M.,
K.C.M.G., etc., Commander-in-Chief of the
British Expeditionary Forces.

WE, your brothers and sisters, have come over from England to try and entertain and amuse you during New Year's week, and to bring you

"A MESSAGE FROM HOME."

You have only to command us and we shall be proud to give you the best Entertainment in our power

AT ANY TIME AND AT ANY PLACE.

The Party will consist of your old and affectionate friends :—

ELLALINE TERRISS SEYMOUR HICKS
GLADYS COOPER BEN DAVIES
IVY ST. HELIER WILLIE FRAME
WILL VAN ALLEN
THE CINEMATOGRAPH

Here we are ! Here we are ! ! Here we are again ! ! !

It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
but not too far for us.

Bless you !

Ellaline Terriss will sing more sweetly and act more charmingly than ever for you.

Seymour Hicks will perspire more freely.

Ben Davies will sing as he has never sung before.

Gladys Cooper will act and look more like her post-cards than they do.

Ivy St. Helier will delight you as she has always done.

Willie Frame will make you laugh as much in France as he does in Bonnie Scotland. Och, Hi!

Will Van Allen will patter and play all day.

The Cinematograph will show you thousands of feet of amusing films.

COME IN, SOLDIERS.

As many of you and often as you like.

You will confer a favour on us by letting us work for you, and the angels in disguise, the brave ladies who nurse you, ask them to honour us with their presence also.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

GOD PROTECT YOU AND YOUR BRAVE ALLIES.

LONG LIVE ENGLAND! VIVE LA FRANCE! AND BRAVO, BRAVE BELGIUM!

The Price of Admission is } OUR GRATITUDE TO YOU.

It was a simple little effort, but the man who wrote it did so with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Mr. Boardman, the then manager of the Hippodrome, Brighton, undertook the transport arrangements, which was no light work, for apart from food and itinerary details, we took with us ten motor cars. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent accompanied us, as did also a representative of

the *Daily Mail*. In all, I think, we numbered twenty people.

On hearing that we were setting out for his country, M. Cambon, the then Ambassador of France to the Court of St. James's, insisted on signing my passport himself, a very gracious and charming thing for him to have thought of.

We arrived at Boulogne in the darkness of a late December afternoon. To our surprise, on reaching the pier, we heard a great shout go up. It was thronged with soldiers who had heard we were arriving. An hour from our time of landing we were giving our first concert in the Casino. How different it looked from the old peace days when we had been accustomed to wander in its grounds and stroll idly to the tables to gamble for modest sums. There were beds everywhere, each one filled with a man of our own, suffering for us. Never shall I forget that concert. It was my first contact with the realities of War. We all sang our songs and did our work choking with emotion it was our duty to hide.

The great gentlemen who made up our audience, boys of almost tender years, and fathers of families who had answered the call, were pleased and thanked us. This was bad enough—to be thanked for our rubbish, but when the nurses crowded round us and said they were one and all grateful, this, extraordinary humility on their part, broke me up entirely, and alone where no one could see or hear I am proud to say I sobbed my heart out.

That night later I had one of the most painful experiences of my life, a thing which would have

tried the nerves of a man of iron. I was told that a young soldier who was dying, and who had been unable to be carried in to the Main Hall for the entertainment, wished to speak to me. Quietly I went to a dimly lit bed surrounded by a screen. I felt a hand take mine—the hand of a soldier—little more than a boy. I bent over him and he thanked me for coming. I asked him if there was anything I could do for him and he answered, "I should like to hear you sing 'The Honeysuckle and the Bee' once again." How I did I don't know, but I was glad I was given strength to do so. I leaned down over him and crooned the simple little melody into his ear—very afraid with no music to help me. I sang it all through and he smiled. It was very dark and quietly I stole away. I have seldom sung that song since.

And all our party—how wonderful they were: never tired, always cheerful, ever willing morning, noon and night. It would be ungracious to differentiate between them, but I may be forgiven perhaps for paying a special tribute to Ben Davies and Willie Frame, England's greatest tenor, by no means a young man, singing, singing, singing, and a Scotsman of three score years, working, working, working, and giving all that was in his brave old body even more times than he was asked to.

Gradually as the War went on everyone who tried to amuse the soldiers became accustomed to the dreadful suffering they witnessed, but these first meetings with our wounded were such a shock that perhaps I may be forgiven for mentioning their effect on all of us.

One of the most moving experiences of my stay in France was on the occasion I went with Ben Davies to hear him sing "Land of my Fathers" to a Welsh regiment entraining for the trenches. It was pouring with rain, and the night pitch-black. All about us were hundreds of soldiers in full marching order, standing at ease, waiting for us. An order was shouted, and they stood at attention. There was a pause, and the beautiful voice of our great singer rang out clear and wonderfully as he sang his and their hymn to them in their native tongue. Hardly had the first refrain died from his lips when five hundred voices joined in the anthem they had learned at their mother's knee. Never, I am certain, shall I know anything like the effect this had upon me even if I live to be a hundred years old. The second verse followed. The refrain was again repeated, and then came a silence, and in it I knew that the hearts of the singers were beating for the loved ones they had left behind them in the peaceful valleys and the mountain-sides of Wales. A brave nation's pledge to the Motherland had been given perhaps for the last time. Suddenly a voice rang out. It was the voice of Lord Ninon Crichton Stuart, their Colonel. "Men of Wales," he shouted, "three cheers for your countryman, Mr. Ben Davies." They were three mighty ones. The great singer bowed his head and turned away. I bid Lord Ninon Stuart good-bye. Smilingly he shook me by the hand, and bravely this grand type of all that was best in Britain went to his death. Within a week the host who had raised their voices with him in prayer

lay withered and strewn upon the hungry soil of France. Terrible! Terrible!! Terrible!!!

Having given my word to return to London earlier than the rest of our party, as the management of the Lyric Theatre were greatly depending upon me, I did so, when the grave news reached me that Seymour was dying. He had left England ill and had fallen a victim to double pneumonia. He was brought over on the hospital ship *Asturias*, but was in so desperate a condition that they were unable to land him at Southampton. He was unconscious, and was taken backwards and forwards four times with wounded from the front, many of whom in those days were arriving in England in their field dressings. By God's mercy my husband recovered, and so I pass on; but not before I express my profound gratitude to those known and unknown to me who helped me in my anxious hours. Friends were at hand on every side. A little Jewish boy who had been at the Coliseum, and was then a hospital sergeant, by the name of Grossman, got me through Southampton quickly and helped me always beyond words. I can never be too grateful to him. Dear Alfred Fripp dashed down from London. Mr. Alfred Rothschild at once came to my aid, and Mr. Gordon Selfridge, whom I had only met once, sent everything possible he could to assist us. For what my prayers are worth, they are always remembered in them. But, as after the night there came a dawn for me, so, as I say, I will pass on.

Shortly after our return from France our whole party were greatly honoured by the Playgoers'

Club, who gave them a Welcome Home dinner. It was a very memorable evening, the guests who attended being representative of all walks in life. Dear Marshall Hall made a brilliant speech, as did many others, including the much beloved Carl Hentschel. I am afraid our replies were not oratorical blossoms. They were grateful "Thank yous," though, which came from our hearts. I am a wretched hand at making public utterances, and, if anything, Seymour is a little worse. I hope he won't read this page.

The War in all its fury had now been raging for six months, and everyone realized that it was only just beginning. There was much for my profession to do and they did it well. It was only their duty, I know, but with a few miserable exceptions (always to be found in any large community), they none of them shirked anything, most of them going about their duty in the most unostentatious manner. As only one instance among hundreds, I remember meeting Mr. Nelson Keys looking very tired going to his theatre. He had done five hospital turns that day, and that was the reason he smilingly said, "I feel a little cheap," and there were many others like him.

One of the most stirring entertainments I appeared at was one I went to at the request of Lord Beatty, given for the sailors at Rosyth just before the Battle of Jutland. My Betty was very anxious to possess a photograph of the great sailor, and he most kindly sent her a photograph on which was written: "To Betty from Beatty." My family waves a good-morning to it daily. Hanging beside

it, nothing do we hold more precious than a present from Lord Haig. When the Armistice was signed this much beloved and honoured man took the trouble to send me the plan of his battle-front as it appeared on the last day of the War. On it he wrote:

"To Mrs. Seymour Hicks with my best thanks.
DOUGLAS HAIG.
Field-Marshal."

Priceless memories are these of men who meant so much to England.

I think during the War the thing that I, in common with many of my comrades, found most trying was having to make merry on the stage to the accompaniment of bombs and anti-aircraft guns outside. It was by no means amusing to say, as I had to in one play, "How still everything is to-night," and the next second to hear a mighty explosion. This happened the night the offices of *John Bull* were wrecked, though of course many were the funny happenings which went hand-in-hand with the arrival of the "Bomb boys."

An incident which I couldn't help laughing about was one which happened during the first night of a revue at the Alhambra. One of the actors was singing a song with a refrain of the "no one shall touch old England" kind, when in the middle of it a bomb fell no great distance from the theatre. Among the audience was a great friend of ours, a very good-hearted little man, but one who was terrified at even the mention of a raid. On hearing the explosion he jumped up from his seat, rushed

out of the house, dived into the Leicester Square Tube and took a train to Golders Green. Feeling he was perfectly safe, he walked out of the station and was about to breathe a sigh of relief when one of the machines which had been attacking the West End dropped a bomb within a hundred yards of him. Where he made for then history does not relate.

On the day of the daylight raid over London our cook made an illuminating remark which relieved the tension considerably. I told her what was happening and that if she wished to she had better sit in the cellar, though I myself meant to watch what was going on from the roof. "Are the Germans here, mum?" she inquired. I told her they were, and that about thirty aeroplanes were over London attacking it. All she said was: "Oh! the brutes, the brutes! Isn't it awful? and I've got a nephew painting Blackfriars Bridge to-day." I think the poor soul was certain the Kaiser had heard what her relation was doing and had determined to stop him.

We had now taken a lease of the Prince's Theatre from the Messrs. Melville, and during our tenancy revived *Bluebell*, *Broadway Jones*, *The Catch of the Season*, and other plays most successfully, and it was during the time we were at this popular house that we conceived the idea of opening the theatre every Sunday evening and giving a miscellaneous entertainment, free to all soldiers in uniform. These performances met with tremendous success and filled a long-felt want for the men, especially those from the Dominions, who

were wandering aimlessly about on Sunday nights with nothing whatever to do. At each of these performances, month in and month out, we never played to less than two thousand of those on leave, and the programmes we were able to offer them were, through the generosity of my brothers and sisters, on many occasions such as no money could have bought.

Looking back at the list of celebrities who volunteered to help us, the name of hardly anyone of note is absent. Of course Seymour and myself were a sort of standing dish, and "filled in," as it is called, if ever someone was late or unavoidably detained elsewhere.

I often thought the soldiers would get heartily sick of our faces, but I suppose they knew we meant well and so forgave us. Here is one programme taken haphazard from many:

H. B. Irving and Co. in *A Story of Waterloo.*
Marie Lloyd.
Seymour Hicks.
Ellaline Terriss.
Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson.
Charles Hart, the coloured comedian.
The Cinema and
A Military Band.

Naturally some nights were infinitely better than others, but they were all cheery affairs, for it became a custom that any of the soldiers in the audience who could sing, recite, or entertain should come on to the stage and do so. I may say that the most excellent turns often came from the audience,

many of the men being either professionals or first-class amateurs.

The singing of chorus songs by two thousand men each evening was always one of the most popular items and was a thing worth journeying many miles to hear.

The songs of the Army were sung with a queer fervour by its men, and in "Tipperary," "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag," "A little grey home in the West" and "Keep the home fires burning," I have always felt that they meant more to the soldier as an outlet for his feelings than we civilians ever knew. For the most scholarly verses ever written can never compare with these simple war lyrics made for ever classics by the times of danger of which they were so much a part.

Later, nearly all the theatres followed our example and opened on Sunday evenings, a thing which turned out a great boon for the lads in khaki on those pitch-black and dreary nights.

Only once, I am happy to say, was I ever in real danger in a raid. We were appearing in a musical play by Seymour and Haydn Wood called *Cash on Delivery* at the Palace Theatre. One evening bombs began to fall about seven-thirty. Things became quiet again about an hour afterwards, and at nine the raid was considered at an end. On coming out of the stage door at eleven-thirty, however, we found that the old cabman who used to drive us had not arrived, and, wondering why, I asked if the "All clear" had gone. To our surprise the stage door keeper said, "No, miss, it hasn't, but it must be all over—it's four hours since the

Huns was 'ere. Besides, we should have got a message from Bow Street if things weren't right. They always let us know."

Thinking that the man was correct in his surmise, we decided to walk to Piccadilly Circus and try to get a bus. We were living in Regent's Park. The streets were full, and we reached the end of Shaftesbury Avenue, my dear adopted girl Mabel, Ivy St. Helier, Seymour and myself. We were laughing and talking and were half-way across the Circus, making for the Swan and Edgar building, when all of a sudden we heard just above us a noise like an express train. Involuntarily we bent down, and only looked up when we heard a terrific bang. An aerial torpedo had struck the famous drapery establishment opposite us on the Piccadilly side. A policeman next us had his helmet knocked off, seven people I think were killed outright, and many others were flung to the ground by the concussion. Thankful at our escape, which was an extremely narrow one, we began assisting those we could, and shepherded some thirty or forty frightened women into the Imperial Restaurant, kept by our old friend Mr. Oddenino. He immediately gave us sanctuary and hurried everyone downstairs into the basement of his premises. I need hardly say that the experience had been a terrifying one, and while many of the men made light of it, the women were all more or less in a state of hysteria. Coffee and brandy was served out in large quantities, and we had not been there more than five minutes when an ominous rumble was heard, followed by another, and yet another. " My

hat," whispered Seymour to me, "this is the biggest raid of the lot." In a few minutes another rumbling was heard, and seeing that there might be a panic, Seymour began reassuring all and sundry that it was nothing—that it was our planes who were up fighting the invader and that there was no need to be frightened at all. This restored confidence, but as the noise, sometimes louder and sometimes more distant, continued, even my old man, who had been doing his best to keep things going, was beginning to lose his effect on the highly-strung gathering and was not himself sure that half London was not being blown up. At last he momentarily gave up attempting to soothe the timid and, lighting a cigar in a corner, said to one of the waiters, "What a noise. They must be doing an awful lot of damage." "What noise?" said the waiter. "Why, listen to it, my dear fellow," said Seymour. "Listen to it. There it goes again." "Oh! that," said the man from Italy. "Yes, that," said Seymour. "Oh! that is all right," replied the waiter. "Those noises are the trains in the Tube."

I had a favourite little Pekinese in my arms when the bomb fell. It was a wonderful little animal and could do everything but actually speak. It never recovered from the din and smashing of glass that night, and for years afterwards if a door banged or a sudden noise was heard, it would stand and tremble, and I'm certain used to live the night of our escape all over again.

As the War dragged on, the work of the theatre people grew heavier and heavier, for the number

of crippled men grew greater and greater, and it was this sad reason for working which often made the strain intolerable, not indeed the work itself, which was proudly given for the heroes who had saved our dear land.

At last the end came. But the joys of Armistice Day were marred for us, for on November 11th Seymour's soldier brother died in hospital. But it would be wrong of me to comment on our sorrow, for there was not a corner of the Empire in which black was not to be seen.

When peace reigned again, gradually, as with other callings, our own fell back into its normal state, and so, happier to write of 1919, let me forget the theatre as it was in times when dry-eyed women listened to the tramp of marching men and none dared ask a neighbour of his son.

When I say that things became normal in the theatre again, I am wrong. Normal they may have been in that we all settled down to our ordinary routine, but the audiences had changed and have remained changed ever since. The new ones who had seen nothing but revue and musical comedies, which were the staple War fare—and rightly so, for they not only pleased the eye and ear of a weary nation, but did nothing in the way of taxing its mentality—knew nothing of the Drama proper, while the old ones, accustomed to the nerve-racking excitement of four long years, when they were over demanded the unusual. With bobbed hair, the lip-stick, short skirts or trousers, and sex equality outside the playhouse, Realism in Excelsis became the vogue within it, and pre-War unmentionable

subjects were chosen as basic motives for many pieces, youth and maiden discussing them quite frankly with each other.

While a greater freedom among young people may be all to the good in the long run, and in itself a protection for the "Miss" who in pre-War days had been taught by her mother that bread and butter should be her only form of diet when eating with a male companion, still I cannot help thinking that "calling a spade a spade" in the theatre has done nothing to help our art. I know perhaps I am one of the minority, but no one will convince me that naked dancers, obscene language, and plays which have sex degeneracy and disease as their motives are things that because of their so-called naturalness can elevate a beautiful art. Indeed they deprave it sadly.

The great actors and actresses of the past were for none of these things: they only became great by portraying superlatively the grand passions of Love and Hate, whose heights and depths surely are sufficient even for unquestioned genius.

However, as Canute failed in his command to the waves, so no amount of ink-spilling will stem the tide of, shall I call it, "unnecessary modernity" in the theatre, and as dame Drama is old enough and big enough to work out her own salvation, heedless of the stumbling-blocks which passing fashion flings across her path, those of the present who sorrow can cheerfully look forward to a clean and classic future, for there is no pendulum swinging forward that will not some day swing back again.

The War made fortunes for many who ought

never to have had anything to do with my profession. Commercial only they were—commercial only they are, and, to the undoing of the theatre, commercial only will they be, so long as they remain unwelcome visitors in a house they should never have entered.

They have, with the exception of a very few, turned their backs on everything but plays "out of the mould," and, what is even worse, through turning theatre rentals into Stock Exchange shares have driven the actor-manager from his home, and with him his policy, without which no playhouse can possibly exist. Happily, Sir Barry Jackson, who loves the drama for the drama's sake, has trodden paths which others were frightened to explore, and has given real things to the public, which but for him might never have seen the light of nights. Sir Nigel Playfair, too, has never hesitated to choose what he felt was a call and his duty to produce, and, being the new parent of centuries-old manuscripts, has done great service not only to the stage but to the public.

Among the little band of brave ones is Mr. Basil Dean, who, quite undaunted, dares the heights, searching for eidelweiss or unknown flowers. So, having these three, why should we be without hope?

But of the Theatre—Theatre—there is as a manager only one man among us, and that is Mr. Charles B. Cochran. Were I a millionairess I should say: "Go and do whatever you like, for even your errors will be illuminating." Apart from his showmanship, he has that unbuyable and priceless gift, the understanding of the human element in

the playhouse ; the appreciation of what the artist is striving after, and the love of the beautiful in every art form, oblivious of its commercial value. He is a Crusader who would fight for what gave pleasure to himself either in tragedy, comedy, revue, or entertainment.

He has the Irving, Augustus Harris, Frohman, Tree vision, for which no glass has yet been ground to find the horizon.

I have never, I am glad to say, been of a combative disposition. Towards success or failure I have always been equally indifferent, for early I realized how fleeting is the former and how negligible the latter compared with that which really matters in this little life of ours : good health, a few staunch friends, enough money for necessities, love in one's home, however simple that home may be, and what need anyone care about the weather ?

I hope it will not be thought, however, that I have no very definite opinions of my own about the profession I have worked in for forty years, because I have. Unilluminating they may be, but at the same time, having lived in the company of many wonderful persons, I am often filled with amazement and amusement to see to-day really clever people wasting their time beating the air. If actors would only act and not become controversial, and managers would only manage, how much better for the players' calling. Somehow to-day the angles are much changed, and by no means for the better.

Henry Irving and his contemporaries busied themselves with their work, and in doing so were able to give the public of their best; and years ago

managers managed their houses, a surely hazardous enough enterprise without the distraction of financial schemes as far removed from the players' art as are the Poles. Still, as a great journalist once said to me, "News point and not views point" is what is wanted, so let Yesterday be forgotten and To-day be taken by the hand.

The old playgoer may croak of bygone times. It is only natural he should do so. In twenty years no doubt those who live to-day will be as true to all they love now and will themselves be only mildly tolerant of things a rising generation will shout enthusiastically about. It is Life. The coach for one, the motor car for another, the flying-machine at hand, and who knows what else to come. But to belittle any one of these at the expense of the other, seeing that they each in their turn have deserved well of their hour, is of no value, for didn't Mrs. Malaprop make a very apt remark about comparisons. Yesterday and To-morrow must take care of themselves. To-day is what concerns us, and To-day in the theatre is a very fine one indeed. Never was the standard of acting higher. Outstanding personalities there may not be, for we lack the great tragedian and tragedienne, the Mathews and the Wyndham, the Robson, the Marie Wilton, John Clayton, John Hare, the Leslie and the Farren, not to mention a host of others, but in 1928 as a whole the British stage compares with any the world over. Where greater actors than the Irish Players? Where finer acting to be seen in any country than that given lately in *The Return of the Soldier?* Show me the equal of

Miss Tempest or Miss Jeffries in their especial line, or any finer actors than Fred Terry, Martin Harvey, and another whose name it is not for me to mention, and a younger school which includes Charles Laughton, giving more than promise of great things.

This is the day of Youth. Let Age praise it, and let those who construct nothing cease to be destructive. As Sir Arthur Pinero once said: "Praise, praise, praise, and you will get ever better things." The great classics made great actors —may they be fostered that such are born again. Then will the artist act on the stage and not off it, and the private lives of those who live in Bohemia, which is the only kingdom they should be citizens of, be left private, for it is the ringing up of the curtain of mystery that should fall and envelope the actor, which has permitted the idle Tom, Dick and Harry to become familiar, and it is common knowledge what that leads to. The old actors were wise men. They knew that no member of the public was clever enough to believe anyone could play Hamlet if they had once seen them eating bacon and eggs. "Other times, other manners," is very true, but I cannot help feeling that the actor's publicity agent was a clever invention of the enemy. But dear, dear, I find myself trundling up the steep hill of controversy to survey the distant "views point," a thing which, of course, I should not do, or I shall find myself in a maelstrom from which my frail bark will emerge unmanned, unrigged, to face unwelcome storms. Therefore let me return to more removed ground, as Shakespeare

has it, " And think on Hastings and begone to Brecknock while my fearful head is on." This I do gladly.

Somehow, I don't know why, but in 1918 I found myself taking things somewhat leisurely for the first time in my life, and I can't say I was sorry. I felt very tired, and while the plays which my husband was producing, *Sleeping Partners* and the like, had no parts as I thought suited to me, and I, having grown out of the parts which in earlier days I had made my own, without knowing it I found myself a looker-on, and no longer a worker. Financial anxiety had vanished, and I was quite happy, devoting my entire time to Betty, who was now becoming a young lady of some importance. I played occasionally, however, at the Coliseum, and joined Seymour, starring with him in the provinces, and also went down to Windsor to appear before Their Majesties the King and Queen in *Broadway Jones*, with the original cast, the occasion being for the benefit of those disabled in the war. The financial result was more than satisfactory, one anonymous donation alone being for £500.

After the performance I had the great honour of being sent for by Their Majesties, who bade me convey to the company their pleasure, the ladies and gentlemen who appeared that night having come from all parts of the kingdom to do so.

Madame Karsavina, before the piece commenced, danced very beautifully as usual, and we finished a memorable evening by giving a large supper party at the White Hart Hotel and then motoring home to London in, I am afraid, the very small hours of the morning.

CHAPTER XVI

SUNNY AUSTRALIA

TIME seemed to pass rapidly in these days of welcome idleness until, without warning, I was taken seriously ill and was obliged to undergo an operation which, although successful in itself, brought about complications which nearly cost me my life. It was then by the mercy of God, and after an heroic struggle on the part of Alfred Fripp and that lovable and understanding man Sir Maurice Abbott-Anderson, that, having become convalescent, Seymour decided to take a company to Australia to give me a real change, and in a warm climate to hope for a complete restoration of my health.

Just prior to our sailing I had the never-to-be-forgotten sorrow of losing my dear brother-in-law, Stanley. It was a bitter blow, for we had laughed together for over twenty-five years. I was a mother and a sister to him, and we loved each other devotedly.

We went on board the Orient liner *Ormuz* during the last week of December, 1923. The trip was wonderful, and although I was practically carried on to the ship at Tilbury, six weeks later

I was, if not in robust health, at any rate able to do without a nurse and enjoy life.

With us were the beautiful Miss Barbara Hoffe, Miss Joan Kingdon, Mr. Frederick Lloyd and, of course, my precious Betty.

The pieces Seymour was to appear in were *Sleeping Partners*, *The Man in Dress Clothes*, and *Broadway Jones*, all of which I had played in with the exception of *The Man in Dress Clothes*.

We arrived at Melbourne a very happy party, Seymour and company to appear under the management of Sir Benjamin and Mr. John Fuller. Everything seemed marvellous. The booking was enormous and the Australian people kind beyond words, when suddenly a bombshell exploded in our midst which looked like wrecking the whole enterprise. The night before the opening of the season Miss Hoffe was taken to a nursing home dangerously ill with typhoid fever.

The position was a desperate one. We were at our wits' end to know what to do, as there was no one who could be got ready even when found, under at least a fortnight. I thought for a long time and then decided to have a try to save the situation. I was far from strong, and although I had seen the play several times didn't know a line of the part. The news of poor Miss Hoffe's misfortune was made known to us at noon, and the curtain had to go up at eight o'clock the following evening. I had little more than thirty hours in which to prepare for the attempt. We decided that the best thing to do was that I should get word perfect in the first scene and get through the rest as best I could.

Never shall I forget that evening. Before the curtain rose Mr. Hugh J. Ward, who at that time was a partner of the Messrs. Fuller, addressed the audience and informed them of the sad cause of Miss Hoffe's absence. A disappointed "Oh!" answered him, as, naturally, the crowded house felt that their evening had been spoiled. It was a very trying moment for me, but when Mr. Ward said that I had volunteered to play the part so that the theatre need not be closed, a tremendous shout went up and I took heart. The ovation I received on my entrance was overwhelming. They knew I had been ill, and as I was still limping slightly, I think on this account, apart, perhaps, from my being known to many, they were over-generous.

As arranged, I had learned the first scene perfectly, but the rest of the play I had rehearsed, not in the ordinary way but in making myself sure as to where I had to walk to, to find the slips of paper on which my part was written out. I may say that this unorthodox method of performing called for all the resource at my command, and when the curtain fell on the last act, the play having gone without a hitch, I was profoundly thankful. Although perhaps I oughtn't to say so, the arrangements made by Seymour for my getting through were masterly, especially when one remembers that he was facing an entirely new public for the first time and that on his personal success the entire season had to stand or fall.

On the backs of chairs, on tables, menu cards, curtains, mantelpieces, in fact everywhere, I found every line I wanted. My partner altered his

positions and played all his love scenes behind me, whispering my replies into my ears unseen, and by handing me a fan at one moment or a newspaper at another, from which I could read the text when prompting was impossible, I, as I say, succeeded in letting Seymour turn what looked like certain defeat into a personal victory.

The Press were more than good about it all, and so we started a year's work in Sunny South Australia playing to crowded houses everywhere we went.

Never shall I forget the end of this memorable evening. The curtain was raised again and again, twenty-seven calls being taken during the night. Of my part in the success it is not, of course, for me to speak, but if I may be allowed to quote a few lines from a letter I found under my bedroom door on the following morning it will be realized that I had no cause to be anything but supremely happy. The letter was from my husband and the lines I give, for the others were of a purely loving nature and, therefore, of no interest to anyone but myself, were :

"How can I thank you enough for what you did last night. We are all, and I most of all, grateful to you beyond words. Your reception should prove to you what a ridiculous thing it has been to ever dream of your retirement as long as we can act together. There is no such thing as age in Art. You looked lovely, you gave a most remarkable exhibition of experience and really beautiful technique, and there is no one to touch you at your own job. We must always work together as we used to, and let us hear no more of retiring and younger leading ladies. They aren't a patch on you."

May I say in quoting these words that I know, perhaps, that they were prompted by love, and it must not be thought that I felt myself really as good as the writer did. Still, they made me very happy and decided me to begin a new career in double harness again, which I did and will always continue to do, for I know my partner would not have it otherwise.

I was very happy, but yet another bombshell awaited us, for on arrival at the theatre the following evening we found that only two hours before Miss Joan Kingdon, who was playing the second most important part in the play, had also been hurried away to a hospital stricken down with typhoid fever. It required all the optimism in our mental make-ups to face this second blow, but as luck would have it Mr. John Fuller's daughter, who had watched the rehearsals, very bravely dressed for the part, went on and played it more than satisfactorily. So again we escaped defeat. How we ourselves were not taken ill I don't know, for we learned afterwards that two of our fellow-passengers had died of typhoid on landing, and several others had been taken seriously ill. The cause of the outbreak was never ascertained. Happily Miss Kingdon recovered, but it was many weeks before she was able to join us again.

We had not been in Australia more than a few hours before we were welcomed by all the Clubs and Societies of the Overseas men who had fought in the war. Hundreds of them had attended our Sunday evening concerts at the Prince's Theatre in London, and I was surprised to find how many

I remembered personally. It was very touching how much they made of the little I had done for them, and I could never get them to realize how great was their war work and how small was mine. They wouldn't have it at all, and their continual kindness both in the theatre and out of it made me feel almost ashamed.

Many of them were present at the Prince's Theatre on Anzac Day, 1918, when I was presented by the Australian soldiers with a huge silver box. It measured two feet in length, was a foot and a half broad, and stood a foot high. Also, too, they gave me an Australian flag which had been with them in France, and which I carried with me on my journey round the world as a mascot.

It was grand meeting all these splendid men again. They had only one fault—they were far too generous about me.

It is curious the tricks Fate keeps in her satchel to show us when we least expect it. Had I not been compelled to act again it is quite possible that I should have retired altogether, but the very fact of being forced to reappear not only gave me a new lease of life theatrically but completely restored my health, for the work banished many a minor ailment which I'm sure I should have brooded on.

Australia's climate and its public made me myself again, and so to the country and its wonderful people I can never be sufficiently grateful.

Miss Hoffe, on becoming convalescent, was not strong enough at the end of six weeks to appear in our second bill, *Sleeping Partners*, and it was therefore decided by our management that I should

become Seymour's permanent partner, which I did, Miss Hoffe being given later two starring productions to herself, after which she returned to England.

Dear Betty made her first appearance on the stage in Melbourne playing small parts in the productions, and quite a leading one in *Old Bill, M.P.* at Sydney. She had always said she disliked the thought of trying to act, and no one was more surprised than I was when she informed me she had changed her mind. She has done quite a lot of work since then, and during our Canadian tour in 1928 played most important parts for the first time, and acted really well. Needless to say, I am very proud of her, and so is her father. Sometimes when I see her, a tall, handsome girl, coming on the stage to play a scene with me, I can hardly realize that it is the same Betty of perambulator days. I am very lucky to have such a sweet girl for a daughter—very!

In thinking happily of Australia there are certain things of which the visitor is continually informed on his arrival there, and which he is told by everyone every day as long as he remains in the country. The following are a few of them:

"Melbourne is so beautifully laid out." Of course it is.

"Sydney is so cosmopolitan." This is what everyone says who lives in Sydney.

"Sydney is the place for a holiday but not to live in." This is said by everyone who lives in Melbourne.

"I expect you found Melbourne a dead-and-alive

place." This is said by the inhabitants of Sydney.

"You haven't seen Australia if you haven't seen the back blocks." This is said by everyone who wants to spoil the enjoyment of a visitor who is only remaining in the Dominion for a month.

"You will get wonderful trout fishing in New Zealand." This is told you by everybody. Children in arms gurgle it.

"In New Zealand you can catch the trout in one stream and cook it in another." This information is written in stone, and another sentence which is also carved on monuments is:

"You will love New Zealand. It is so like England."

As a matter of fact I loved Australia because it was Australia, and I adored New Zealand for a hundred reasons other than because it was like England. However, we grew so accustomed to constantly hearing all this, that we should have been extremely disappointed if anyone had been thoughtless enough to have kept us in ignorance of these secrets.

Sweet Irene and Dion Boucicault were appearing in Sydney and Melbourne during our visit and were a tremendous success both on and off the stage. They had a splendid company with them, and the only piece I had the good fortune to see them in, *Aren't we All*, by Freddie Lonsdale, not only packed their theatres but was, to my mind, in many instances much better played in Australia than it was in London. We saw a great deal of them, which made us very happy.

Among the many people in Melbourne to whom we were indebted for unthankable kindnesses of every description there was no one who did so much for us as the uncrowned Queen of Australia—Dame Nellie Melba. Her house was an open one from the day we set foot on her native land. Nothing was a trouble to her, and this great singer and equally great personage went out of her way to look after my Betty and myself as though we had been placed under her especial care.

Her lovely home at Lilydale, twenty-five miles from Melbourne, is an Arabian Nights' Dream. It is a Palace in the Bush, a treasure-house of wonderful souvenirs of a unique career, surrounded by gardens which are a fairyland.

Nellie, not Dame Nellie but Nellie, as she always makes me call her, was giving her farewell season of Opera in Australia when we were there, and was singing miraculously, especially in *Bohème*. I was present at her last performance, when the audience went mad. I thought they would never allow her to leave the stage. Throughout her season her support and the stars who sang on the nights she did not appear, were all that Italy could send, but Melba was still Melba, even at an age when most great divas have retired, and with her matchless technique she towered above them all.

As a woman she is without the slightest affectation. She is generous and downright in all she says and does. Her friends can do no wrong; but I'm not sure that the few who have found disfavour in her eyes could do anything particularly right.

Nellie Melba is an April-day lovable baby, ever

ready to pout and then forgive, ever ready to help a cause or an individual in distress.

Her little granddaughter, the child of her delightful son George Armstrong and his equally charming wife Evie, is the one thing she lives for, and it is amusing to see the mite exacting homage from this woman to whom crowned heads have been accustomed to pay court.

Our dear young friend, the brilliant Beverley Nicholls, was out in Australia for many months writing Dame Nellie's "Life" when we were there. He was just making his name. We were very fond of him and I shouldn't like to have to add up the number of hours we four used to spend together playing Mah Jongg, and laughing, which was better still. He will write a fine play some day.

Of Sir Benjamin Fuller we saw nothing, as he was in Europe, but his brother John Fuller we saw almost every day, and a dearer, more kind-hearted little man never stepped. He only recently asked us to return to Australia to play in his theatres. Who can tell? I should hate to feel I was never to see his grand country again, with its harbours and its mountains, its mighty tracts of virgin land, its deep blue waters and its ever-golden sun. Even as I write I feel "The Call," so who knows! Perhaps some day if we have plays which we think would please, we may return to this lovable little man who always wore his hat on the back of his head, a hat which surmounted a face that was never without a smile for us. Dear little Johnny Fuller. I remember him being very much amused when he heard of a harmless little joke I perpetrated on Miss

Louise Lovely, the well-known film star. She had arrived in Melbourne from Hollywood and announced that, being on the look-out for film talent, she would welcome on to the stage of the Picture House at which she was appearing anyone who thought they could act for the screen, and would herself put them through their paces. This offer was eagerly accepted by the public, and every afternoon and evening she had many recruits from her audiences who were " tried out " in public to see if they could make love or depict the various human emotions which the wordless play demands.

I thought it would be rather fun to become a recruit, and so one afternoon I dressed up as a very old woman with a white wig, a bonnet and shawl, elastic-side boots, white stockings and a huge umbrella, and took my seat in the auditorium. When Miss Lovely made her usual announcement, asking if anyone would like to be tried, I, in company with a dozen others, walked on the platform leading to the stage. I was the last of the aspirants for film fame, and when the audience saw my bent figure and old-fashioned get-up they broke out into a hearty round of applause, thinking, I suppose, it was a very sporting thing of an old lady to do.

Various tests were made, and feeling I was being left unnoticed I pushed myself forward and said in a quavering voice: " I should like to have a try too, Miss ! " " Certainly you shall, my dear," said Miss Lovely, and asked me to pretend that I was a mother bidding good-bye to her son. This I endeavoured to do, caressing tenderly a youth of twenty, who was extremely nervous and anxious.

When I had obeyed Miss Lovely's directions and acted my best she patted me on the back, much to the delight of the house, who gave another sympathetic round of applause, and, waving my umbrella in triumph, I left the hall and found my way to my maid, who was waiting in the motor-car outside.

As I stepped into it I found to my horror that Seymour was waiting too. His surprise was wonderful to behold! He thought I had taken leave of my senses and couldn't believe that the old lady of seventy with a wrinkled face and snow-white hair was me. It was a most amusing drive home, and the nicest part of it all was that he put his arm round my waist and whispered, "I think, if possible, you will be more of a darling at eighty than you are now."

I wrote to Miss Lovely and told her of my little escapade, but I don't think she could have been given the photograph I sent with the note, as I never received a reply, and certainly wasn't offered an engagement. I have often wondered if I was so very bad, or if she was offended. I hope not.

What a country is Australia, peopled by a nation of free people who live in continual sunshine.

As playgoers they are habitual, enthusiastic and critical. Thirteen thousand miles they may be from London, but they see everything of the theatre done in the most perfect manner, either under the banner of Messrs. Williamson's famous firm or that of the new and successful one which the Brothers Fuller have created and with whom we appeared.

From the day we landed till the hour we set sail

for home every sort of kindness was showered upon us from morning till night. Lord Foster (who was then the Governor-General of the Dominion) and Lady Foster patronized our plays and honoured us continually by allowing us to visit Government House, while their daughter, the beautiful Mrs. Pitt Rivers, who was a most talented amateur actress and whom Seymour had known as a little girl, after joining Irene and Dion Boucicault in a professional capacity for a year in the Dominion came to us for a long season at home, much to our delight.

To write of the beauties of Australia would be like saying that " there are milestones on the Dover Road," for they have been written of many times in letters of gold by all those who have been lucky enough to enjoy them. Therefore, as this is neither a geography nor a guide book, there is no reason why I should take it upon myself to describe what has been so often written about in a masterly way. Still, I can say one thing, and that is this : if anyone has the chance of visiting this great Dominion and doesn't do so they are missing something that will be a memory of undying happiness for them throughout their lives. And equally let no one, if they can, miss seeing New Zealand, which is a dream of beauty. English landscapes, Scottish mountains, Devonshire lanes and all that is lovely in the Emerald Isle march side by side and make a wonderful British patchwork quilt.

River and lake abound with trout, which turn the scale at anything up to thirty pounds. I saw a cast of one at Rotorua of 32 pounds, and we ourselves

killed many of ten and twelve, real brown trout who fight like the salmon of the Tay. Duck are in plenty, and stags of Hungarian origin abound, especially in the region of the Franz Joseph Glacier —eighteen pointers many of them, and twenty stone their weight. How numerous are the deer in the Northern Island may be gathered from the fact that the keepers of one friend of ours kill six hundred hinds yearly on his estate. Not only is New Zealand an England beyond the seas, but it has in its Thermal regions the picturesque Maoris, who make one think of hundreds of years ago, before a British frigate landed the first white man to make the natives wonder, then rebel and afterwards become peaceful citizens of a world-wide Empire.

As a book-loving community the New Zealanders, for their numbers, are the greatest in the world, and as theatre-goers, for anything that is worth while, not to be surpassed.

There are only four big centres—Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, though there are many smaller places in the North Island at which we played, where splendid audiences are to be met with.

In mentioning the sport of New Zealand it will amaze the tenant of a Scottish Forest to know that little more than a one pound yearly permit paid to the State allows its holder to fish and shoot everywhere. It is a veritable sportsman's paradise, and its people, hospitable to a degree, are for England through and through.

After having been away from London for over a year, we sailed from Auckland for home on the then

new motor steamship the *Aorangi*, via Vancouver and New York. On the way we stopped at Honolulu. A wonderland—not perhaps so much like an old-time ballet as is Ceylon, for it has been modernized by the American, though by no means robbed in the process of all its natural beauties.

Its surf-bathing is perfectly splendid, and its climate, which never varies all the year round more than eight degrees, makes it an ideal holiday resort, which I hope sincerely I shall visit again.

Passing through New York we saw our very old friend Charlie Dillingham, and had the utmost kindness and courtesy shown us by Mr. Lee Shubert, of that great American firm " the Shubert Brothers." Seymour had known Mr. Shubert for over thirty years, their first meeting being an extremely dramatic one. They had been introduced to each other in the London offices of the most astute female theatrical personality the theatre has ever known or ever will know, Miss Elizabeth Marbury. It was a chance meeting. Mr. Shubert was practically just at the beginning of his enormously successful career as a manager and little known at the time. Only twenty-four hours after the introduction, Seymour received an urgent message to come to the Hotel Cecil, where a Mr. Shubert was lying dangerously ill. He dashed down to the bedside of his newly-made acquaintance to find that he was indeed apparently in a very serious condition, and that he, knowing few people in a strange city, had thought of Seymour as someone who might help him. The first thing to do, of course, was to get a medical man. Every one known to Seymour,

and they were many, was telephoned to, but none of them was to be found. At his wits' end to know how to help a man in great pain, Seymour went to the hotel office and asked them if they could get a surgeon from Charing Cross Hospital. The clerk in charge asked if any particular doctor had been telephoned for. "Oh! yes," came the reply, "a dozen, but not one of them is at home!" "No, I don't suppose so," said the clerk, "they are all here at a banquet." And so it turned out to be. Practically beneath Mr. Shubert's bedroom all the leading lights of the British medical profession, sixteen hundred in number, were celebrating the first anniversary of the conclusion of the Boer War. Without a moment's delay Sir Alfred Fripp hurried upstairs, diagnosed the case as one of appendicitis in its last stages, operated at once, and Mr. Shubert's life was saved. Surely such a remarkable coincidence has never happened before as a dying man having within his reach a host of brilliant men who could save him and he being quite unaware of the fact.

My meeting with Mr. Shubert all these years afterwards was therefore doubly interesting to me, and the way he gave up his time on several occasions to see that we were entertained was more than charming and a thing not easily to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XVII

CANADA IN WHITE AND GOLD

ENGLAND at last! None but those who have been away for a considerable time from this divine country of ours can understand the strange emotion and the heart-beats which send tears of joy to one's eyes as their Garden Country opens out before them. This is a supreme moment; one that makes exile, however happy a one, worth while. As I gazed in rapture at the woodlands sloping to the Solent's brink then did I understand more than ever why there was no sacrifice too great for our nation to have made to hold secure a Motherland which has no equal in the universe.

After a short holiday we opened at the Lyceum Theatre with our very good friends the Brothers Melville in *The Man in Dress Clothes*, the play which our friend Lord Northcliffe came to see and which by his help and generosity he had made the tremendous success it was on its original production at the Garrick Theatre.

On our opening night at the Lyceum we had an enormous reception from a most distinguished

audience and at the end, when a speech was called for, "my dear" very charmingly only said: "Thank you very gratefully, but this is my missus' night." So of course I had to say a few words to my old London friends. We played to magnificent houses for weeks until we were forced to leave this most popular of theatres owing to the time having arrived for the production of its annual pantomime. We then migrated to the Queen's Theatre, playing the piece at that house for another six weeks.

It being Xmas time, Seymour appeared in *Broadway Jones* every afternoon as well as being in *The Man in Dress Clothes* at night. This was very hard work and also disappointing from a money point of view, for the rent of the theatre being £500 a week, we found it impossible with two old plays to make ends meet. A tour followed this short season, and then a partnership which looked like having all the elements of success in it was entered into between ourselves and our old friend Mr. Robert Courtneidge. He was a man of unrivalled experience and understanding and one for whom we had great respect and affection. We had no new play at the moment, but as we were not to start operations at the Savoy Theatre till the autumn we all felt very sanguine that one would be forthcoming from somewhere long before then, and so off I went with my family to the Continent with a light heart. While we were away in July Mr. Courtneidge produced a very clever play at his theatre, but one which unfortunately failed to attract the public and involved him in very heavy weekly losses. As he had no piece to follow it he asked us if we would

commence our season earlier than at first intended with a revival of *Sleeping Partners*, as he felt that at any rate we should mark time with it, even if we did not make money. We readily agreed to this, and as an added attraction Madame Karsavina appeared in *The Truth about the Russian Ballet* by Sir James Barrie. We played *Sleeping Partners* with Edmund Gwenn and afterwards Herbert Waring in the cast for ten weeks to quite average good business. We could have expected nothing more. Meanwhile we were trying everywhere to get a new play. In this we failed entirely. However, when we were wondering what to do, Mr. Edgar Wallace dramatized one of his books for us and called the piece *Double Dan*. Somehow, as so often happens when three people are in consultation over the best way of handling dramatic situations, differences more often than not arise, and in this case they did so, with the unfortunate result that Seymour, being unable to see eye to eye with his two friends, and Mr. Courtneidge deciding to do the play as Mr. Wallace had written it, there was nothing for it but to stand aside, and it was produced without us. I am sorry to say it only ran a few nights. This was really very bad luck, to be offered the only failure the brilliant Edgar Wallace has ever written. But worse even than the non-success of the play, a management which might have become a really solid one never came into being. From a personal point of view my parting with dear Robert Courtneidge was a real blow as he is of all men in our profession one whose great knowledge and splendid integrity are things which have never been

questioned. And of course it was a great disappointment also not to have worked with Mr. Wallace, for knowing him as a delightful and generous man, I am sure we should all have had many happy times in the theatre together. However, there it was, and finding it impossible to obtain a new play, Seymour wrote a farce for himself called *Mr. What's His Name?* (it was from the French of *Mirande*) and for thirty-five weeks played it at Wyndham's Theatre and the big cities, which filled up his time while I myself was resting, prior to setting out for a long tour through Canada, which we had decided was the best and happiest thing to do in all the circumstances.

As I was not playing at night after leaving the Savoy Theatre, I was delighted to accept an offer to appear in two screen productions. One was called *Blighty* and the other *Land of Hope and Glory*. I am bound to say I like film work immensely and found it most interesting. Its technique, totally unlike that of the stage, is an art of its own, and I shall look forward with more pleasure than ever to acting on the screen again now that the speaking film has come into being.

This new invention will be, I imagine, a most entertaining thing for the public, and the fear of many of my comrades that it will ever take the place of flesh and blood is, I am sure, quite unfounded, for the theatre proper will be still flourishing when mechanical contrivances have been long forgotten.

Just before leaving for Canada, to my infinite delight Seymour was sent for and informed that some of his comrades of the theatre in Paris had

recommended him for the Legion d'Honneur, and that it would be bestowed upon him. To my deep regret, owing to some wonderful rule about foreign decorations, a visionless Government Department at home refused to allow him to accept it. However, being of a happy-go-lucky disposition he, Irish-like, said he would wait till a Labour Government was in power and get the permission he so much wanted from men who understood what forty years' hard work really meant. Frankly, as a Royal lady once remarked, " We are not pleased ! "

Twenty wonderful weeks in the Dominion.

Twenty weeks in which no hour was not a delight !

Twenty weeks among the most generous and open-hearted people in the world ! !

What more could anyone want ? And this has been mine ! ! !

To Cartier's gateway of this land of more than promise, from there to the Gateway of the golden corn, and then on to the wonders of the Pacific Coast, which resembles nothing so much as a beautiful English garden, Canada has spread all her beauty before my eyes and has only given me one great regret, which is, that I have waited so long before being privileged to be her most obedient servant.

Miss Canada is a beautiful debutante. I wonder if the men of Britain know how many foreign wooers are begging for her hand, or if they can realize that this Virgin Queen is turning a deaf ear to all their entreaties because beneath her mantle of red, white and blue there beats a heart which is aching for a suitor from that little island set in a

silver sea, known, respected and feared by all the world as "*England*."

In my seven thousand miles of travel through this Northern America I have met no Canadian man or woman who is not proud of where their forbears hailed from.

The men of Devon here remember well, and still listen to the beating of old Drake's drum, the lads of Lancashire still sing their songs to the music of the mills their fathers worked in, and from the Cornish coast, where the mighty Atlantic hurls herself defeated against impregnable Tintagel, to John o' Groat's who watches over Scapa of victorious memories, the sons of Canada never forget that all these landmarks of a thousand years and more are theirs and ever will remain so. Men of Dorset, men of Wilts, Midland men and hardy Northern yeomen, all are here waiting for their kith and kin to follow. They have toiled and they have sweated —they have laboured and they have made, and with smiling faces and outstretched ungrudging hands they are shouting out to Britain "Welcome."

Theirs is no niggling invitation. They are not setting up the barriers again which they so hardly have hewn down. They are not out for profit for their mighty work. Their shout across the seas is simple and sincere. It is "Come along; we are producing yearly a billion sterling of the earth's good things—share it with us. We ask nothing but that you work with us. Work hard and reap all that we are uncovering, for as Britain's ours so Canada can be yours." This is the cry from Canada to the Motherland. Let those who hear it listen

and take heed, never forgetting that even the truest tire, and that if they call too long in vain they may at last turn unwillingly for sympathy elsewhere.

Canada! What a place!!!

And what a joy ride I have had through all of it. There are no two parts of it alike and no parts, in their own way, less beautiful than the others.

Rudyard Kipling has called her not too happily, so her people feel, "My lady of the Snows." Why did not this great man also label her "My goddess of the Sun." It is not always snow in Canada by any means. It's true she wears a silver gown for many months. This is her right, for she is a lovely lady and knows in what she looks divine, but also, too, she often dresses in a flowing robe of red, and wanders for a period very near as long through untold acres of unburnished gold, plucking her fruits and flowers in abundance.

When I set sail from home I felt, from the tales I had been told of ice and snow and barren places by ignorant people, that I was about to become part of a Polar expedition. But I soon found out what rubbish this all was. "Going to Canada in the winter time? My dear Ella, you will have to buy some fur tooth brushes!" I suspected they were wrong, so I only laughed. How right I was. I did believe one thing, however, that I was told by a very knowledgeable friend of mine, which was that I was going to have a marvellous trip in a magnificent climate and country. How right *she* was.

We sailed from Liverpool on New Year's Eve, and remarkable to relate, although the weather was

rough, I wasn't seasick on New Year's Day. Our ship was the new White Star liner *Laurentic*, and having journeyed the world over in most of the ocean giants I cannot remember ever having been on a more perfect vessel.

There are several splendid steamship lines running from home to the Dominion, and I have no doubt I should have felt happy and comfortable in any of them, but since the days when the *Teutonic*, of ten thousand tons, was called " The Greyhound of the Ocean " and the largest ship so it was then thought ever to be built, I have nearly always travelled White Star, and so I stuck to my old love, which is a thing " the debility and gentry " of every country should endeavour to do.

Our port of disembarkation was Halifax, as we were due to open our tour in the Maritime Provinces.

The company we took with us was an exceedingly good one, including as it did Laurence Caird, Vincent Lawson, Frank Lacy, John Tregale, Morris Harper, Barbara Dillon, Meg Le Monnier, Grace Russell, Gladys Tudor, my Betty, Marie Gentry, and Fay Aynsworth, with Harry Hardy, our old and faithful manager, to shepherd us through.

Our repertoire was not a large one, as we were staying in no city longer than a fortnight. We gave during the season *The Man in Dress Clothes*, *Scrooge*, *Sleeping Partners*, and *Mr. What's His Name?* the latter play being, I think, on the whole, voted the favourite by a laughter-loving public.

We were a very contented party, most of us old friends, and all eager and excited to do our best for our entirely new audiences.

Of our delightful sea trip there is little to be said except that it was perfect. Some of our company were perfectly well, some were perfectly sick. The latter I did not see, but I took their word for it.

On the Thursday prior to Halifax coming in sight I was informed that on the morrow we were sure to feel it bitterly cold, that on Saturday we should be in a blizzard and arriving on Sunday we should probably do so with a list to port, owing to the accumulation of ice upon our decks. As usual, however, the would-be encyclopædias were all wrong. Friday was like a day on the Riviera in Spring, on Saturday I was walking the deck without a fur wrap, and on arrival at Halifax the weather was quite mild and extremely like the sort one gets at Bournemouth in April.

As we cast anchor in the early dawn of a January day and caught our first glimpse of the land which had sent one out of every sixteen of its population (counting in old men, women and children) to help save our Empire in the Great War, there was not one of our party who did not feel profoundly impressed. The thought of this moved me deeply, and I am not ashamed to own it—I had a big lump in my throat as I stood watching the town grow with the coming of the dawn.

As the ship came alongside, it was now ten o'clock, for the first time I realized the vast difference between this and an English port. To begin with, we were paying *in cents* for our newspapers. The men on the wharf were in blue overalls or lumber jackets, and English was being spoken with in what to our ears sounded a slightly American accent. We were

certainly in a new country. The gang plank had hardly been lowered before a journalist was at my side, his first words being, "Say, may I ask if you are Miss Terriss, because if so, how do you like Canada?" A newspaper boy followed, who handed me a Sunday edition which looked like two blankets rolled into one, with a request framed in two words: "Ten cents." I gave him twenty-five; I realized I was in a land of Equality, Vitality and Paternity.

Now, though I know that Vitality is most necessary, and Paternity is by no means *un*necessary, Equality I don't believe in, for the simple reason that I am certain there is no such thing. In other countries where they attempt to practise it, it has generally been an excuse for bad manners. Equality, by all means, if the manners of the late Lord Chesterfield are its standard, but unless this is the case social equality is as impossible as equality of brains or purse. Still, I said to myself, the equality complex of Canada may not be an arrogant one; it may be something charming, and I had not been long among its people before I found that this was exactly what Canadian equality did mean. A frank and kindly attitude between man and man, and by no means the chip-on-the-shoulder class of equality which gets one's back up. As a matter of fact, the longer I was in Canada the more I realized that the delightful manners of its people are the best in the world.

Below decks our party met with their first Canadian friends. We found we weren't such strangers after all. Everyone seemed expecting us, all anxious to hold out a friendly hand. The

manager of the local theatre informed me that the sale of seats was a record one, and that we were going to do wonderful business. This was great news.

An old gentleman pushed aside a crowd of kindly welcomers, and grasping me warmly by the hand, said : " Ellaline Terriss, my dear, I remember you in 1906 at the old Gaiety Theatre." This was splendid. Somebody knew me, but little did I know that the words, " I remember you," were to be carved across my heart during my entire tour. I don't think I ever met a single soul in the Dominion who didn't commence his or her conversation without saying : " I remember you."

The disconcerting part of all this was that nobody seemed to remember me *yesterday*. They all appeared to remember me a hundred years ago. At first I attempted to put everyone right in their dates, as I began to feel they must imagine I was Noah's first wife. But after a week or two I gave it up as hopeless, and agreed with everything everyone said. Many a time old ladies told me that their mothers had told them that I was the first actress they ever saw, while little boys assured me that their grandfathers remembered me supporting Samuel Phelps. I had to agree with all and sundry who said they had seen me in pieces I had never heard of, and of playing with actors I had never met, while the number of songs which I had never sung that I was remembered in was astounding.

Adding it all up, my age during my first tour in Canada ranged from ninety-five to nothing less than sixty-eight, and explain as I would, no one would believe me, so I learned to say : " Was I ?

Oh! Do you? Really! Fancy that!" Little did I think that "I remember you" from the lips of my first old gentleman friend was to become a catchword which first bewildered, then worried, and at last amused me.

Halifax! what a delightful old town, and what a community of hospitable people. From early morning till late at night everyone was always trying to do something for us. Unfortunately our work was so hard, putting on as we did three plays in five days, that we were unable to accept one half of the kindness offered, but what all this warm-hearted welcome meant to us on our arrival as strangers in a strange land those who gave it will never know.

There is a feeling of peace and quiet in Halifax. It has about it a dignified remembrance of long-departed British garrisons and naval days, and its people are, I think, in their ways and bearing more of England, with the exception of Victoria, B.C., than any city we afterwards visited.

This, the capital of Nova Scotia, has a population of some sixty odd thousand souls, and though there are flourishing industries within its gates, and it is one of the chief terminal points of the Canadian National Railway, it is quite devoid of noise and bustle. Over it all there still hangs an atmosphere of the French regime, it is a Sèvres bowl filled with rose leaves a Louis had placed in it, and they, though now withered by the centuries and owned by others, still possess fragrant memories of a Court where brocaded ladies in full hoop skirts lingered idly with the swans in the Trianon Gardens, and of

men in powder and patches, who drew silver-handled swords in defence of other men's wives.

I do not mean for a moment that Halifax of to-day resembles France in being, though that there is definitely a French stamp left upon it by its former tenants is certain. The mouldings in the old houses are of old Paris. Many a wardrobe has Brittany written across its face, and the marble mantelpieces set in panelled walls seem to cry out to the traveller, "*Bon jour*." It is a city of romance and many happenings, and has been so ever since the early days of the seventeenth century. During the Revolutionary War, and later, in 1812, Halifax was a British Naval base, and it was into her wonderful harbour, after her historical battle with the *Chesapeake*, that the *Shannon* towed her prize.

The Indian has lived upon her heights. The French, who by right of discovery, owned her, were, in their turn, by force of arms compelled to leave, the troops of England taking possession in 1749. Since then she has seen not only the blockade-runners of the American Civil War, but has held secure the fleets of Britain in her waters during the World's great struggle with the German Empire and her allies.

It was fine to remember, too, that our present Majesty the King, as Duke of York, was quartered here in his naval days, and also that, being the nearest port in Northern America to England, it is well named "The Gateway of the Dominion."

Nova Scotia, tucked away in an eastern corner, might strike the casual observer of a map as being of quite ordinary size, and it is only when he dis-

covers that this unassuming-looking piece of land on paper has an area of over twenty-one thousand square miles that he begins to realize the gigantic continent he is about to enter. It is difficult at first to grasp that :

> There are five million acres in Nova Scotia waiting for British spades and picks to successfully exploit them.
>
> It has an apple crop of well over a million and twenty thousands bushels, and
>
> Its fishing industries produce a yearly revenue equal to two million, two hundred thousand pounds sterling.
>
> One rubs one's eyes when one is informed that the Maritime Provinces take a toll from the sea every twelve months of thirty million lobsters, and that the immense forests and coal mines of Nova Scotia, and her other mines of iron ore and gypsum, yield for her a yearly production value from all sources of over a hundred and eighty million dollars.

I have set down haphazard these rough statistics for one reason only, and that is to try and impress on my brother Englishmen what immense possibilities await them if they make up their minds to settle in Canada, for they must remember that the above figures represent the income of only a tiny slice of what she has to offer.

The scenery in Nova Scotia is beautiful and varied, and every kind of sport is at the settler's door. There is the best of trout and salmon fishing, while duck, woodcock, and small game of

all kinds are at hand for those who can shoot straight, and during the summer months the bathing from sandy beaches and boating in blue open waters are each year making her the Mecca of the tourist in search of a delightful holiday.

Nova Scotia is "the Province of first things," for it was the first province in the Dominion to build Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, a Sunday School, and a Dockyard; the first to found a University and Public School, and also to print a newspaper. And it was in Halifax that the first North American road was made.

Naturally all this interested me vastly, but the thing I was, of course, most anxious to get all the information possible about first-hand, was the condition of the Canadian Theatre, its playgoers, and the form of entertainment they were accustomed to, and, in fact, everything in this new world which had anything to do with my work. This I immediately set out to do, and I made straightway for the playhouse at which we were to open.

The Majestic Theatre at Halifax is some fifty years old and is built on really very beautiful lines. The sweep of its circles impressed me very much indeed; the rake of the floor and the placing of its boxes gave me the sense of being in a real theatre—just that feeling which one used to get in the old Gaiety Theatre, London, or the Prince's Theatre, Bristol, England, both of which houses, designed by the same architect, have always seemed to me to be structurally perfect for the player and his audience alike. The house was well equipped in every way, and the working staff excellent.

What struck me most forcibly about the Canadian stage hands was their extraordinary efficiency, for not only did each man carry his own tools, but these were all of the latest type for nailing, screwing and measuring. They worked, too, with greater speed than our stage men do, though it was a trifle surprising at first to see many of them with cigarettes or cigars in their mouths as they set about their business. Their answers in taking instructions lacked any kind of embroidery, consisting as they did of "Yep" and "Nope," but they were extremely civil and obliging and never needed anything explaining to them twice.

When I mention that we produced four plays in four days, two of which were difficult ones, and played two matinées during that period, their quality and endurance, for they were up most nights till three o'clock, and worked all the next day from nine in the morning, speaks for itself.

Our own four Canadians, "The Crew," as they were called, who were our permanent travelling staff, were splendid fellows. No praise could be too high for them. Often and again have they loaded up their trucks after a Wednesday evening's performance, travelled all night, arrived at the next town at midday, set up the scenery for the play we were presenting, saw that the curtain rose and fell upon it without a hitch, and were ready again early the next morning to stage an entirely new production. It is true they are very much better paid than our men at home, receiving, as they do, a Union wage of eighteen pounds a week, but I know it was not only because of this that they were so uniformly

conscientious: they took a pride in their work and were anxious to show of what their new country was capable from the theatre angle.

In mentioning that our crew were members of a Union, there was no reason that this should not be so, but to find that the stage mechanics throughout Canada took their orders from New York was, to say the least of it, a little surprising.

This is a thing which surely ought to be changed without a moment's delay, for I cannot picture an American organization dictating terms to workmen in England or of English workmen giving orders to the United States on a labour question. Why should the free men of Canada be under the domination of the Stars and Stripes?

It would ill become me to say that our opening was a very successful one. But perhaps I may be forgiven for whispering that every seat was sold for every performance and that the public were generous in the extreme. As a whole, throughout the Dominion the audiences are the same. They are very responsive and quick in the uptake, and I saw no difference whatever between them and the best class of English theatre patrons.

It was at a semi-official gathering that I heard for the first time Canada's own anthem. I defy anyone with the slightest vision or with the smallest amount of imagination to listen to the men of Canada unmoved, as with their heads turned towards the Union Jack they sing with simple fervour: "Oh! Canada, my native land, I stand on guard for thee." The melody, written by a French Canadian, in form reminded me of Sir

Edward Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory," and it is the almost unconscious loyalty of the Canadian that makes it so grand a thing. Perhaps his loyalty's chief beauty is that it is all taken so much for granted by him, that for a stranger to express profound admiration of it would seem a grave impertinence. The Canadians stand for their native land and all that is good for it, and honour the Homeland, which many of them have never dwelt in, by coupling it with *their* home, thus making the two countries one and for ever inseparable.

If I had come to the Dominion for no other reason than to have heard this beautiful and indeed holy anthem I should have been well repaid.

On leaving Halifax and its people and bidding good-bye to our many personal friends, including the members of the Press, who had gone out of their way to be kind to us, we did so with many regrets, for ours had been a rose-strewn path. We broke our journey to Montreal, where the big city campaign was to begin, at St. John, New Brunswick, a most charming and delightful little town if ever there was one. The trip was made in a train-de-luxe on the Canadian National System, and was certainly a surprise to us in railway travel. There was no comfort one could think of which was not to be found, and with the exception of the Rome Express, the Golden Arrow, or the Paris Blue train, there are no railways on our side of the world to compare in any way with the Canadian ones.

Our entire tour had, however, been booked through the C.P.R., which stands for Canadian Pacific Railway, and so we had no other chance of

using the National, but from all we heard of it, there can assuredly be little to choose between this splendid line and its friendly rival.

Of the C.P.R. I can speak with the knowledge of nearly seven thousand miles of travel, and it is only the passenger who has revelled in its luxury that can attempt to describe its amazing service, and then he will find himself at a loss for words. Some wag said, I believe, that C.P.R. was written so much over the Dominion that it stood for "Canada Perfectly Run." Be this as it may, one is quite conscious that Canada would not be Canada without this gigantic Corporation which has supplied its needs in every shape and way. It has built not only hotels which are the very last word in architecture, decoration and comfort, but its service of smiling faces makes life, however tired you may be, worth living. It must have taken years of continual effort and discipline to have instilled into the heads of each and every one of its officials, from the bell boys to the managers and from the porters to the guards, the watchword of the Company: "Nothing is a trouble."

During the journey we had a wait of a couple of hours at the town of Moncton (which brought back memories to me of the Gaiety and "A little bit of string." It seemed to be, even on Sunday, a very alive little place, extremely well laid out, and "plenty doing," I should imagine, on a week-day.

We wandered about, and were much amused at some of the advertisements to be seen. One little shop called itself a "Beauty Parlour," the placard announcing this fact being nailed to a tree. An

extremely plain looking lady was standing in the doorway. Still, she may only have been the Parlour.

Outside an eating house we saw a notice which read: "Drinking is prohibited in here. This is a dry country." And to entice the housewife, a large bill announced on an enormous hoarding that, it being winter, "Now was the time for the family sausage"; and a small hotel, which must have had for its proprietor a man with quite a good sense of humour, had been christened, "The Dew Drop Inn," which was by no means bad.

I had a long talk in a Chinese restaurant with an ex-service man, who said he had often seen me in London. He, of course, opened the conversation with the usual, "I remember you." He told us many things about New Brunswick, of the excellent trout fishing to be had everywhere and also of the plenitude of big game. Moose, he informed me, were constantly seen on the outskirts of Moncton; one indeed having, to his knowledge, been shot in the town itself during the preceding season. I don't think he was trying to be funny. He had a waxed moustache.

Talking of moose, the shooting of this docile beast must be very poor sport, and every Canadian I know speaks of it as such. From the description I have been given of it, it must be rather like proceeding to shoot the domestic cow, the only difference between these two animals being that one gives milk and the other has a full-size card-table on his head.

On arriving at St. John, to our intense delight, snow began to fall heavily. We had all pictured

Canada in winter time as a kingdom of jingling bells and fur wrappings, and our dream was now a reality, for it was ten degrees below zero. When we were told this we couldn't believe it, and when the next morning the thermometer registered "*twenty* degrees below" we were more astonished still, for we had all felt the cold far more on a damp November day in London.

"Twenty below" in Canada is exhilarating. The white carpet, a foot thick, on which we trod glistened beneath the brilliant noonday sun, and the sky above us was as blue as the Mediterranean in sleepy July. Every breath we took was a glass of champagne and we moved on air. Everyone in the streets was alert and cheery. Little boys were dragging tiny sleighs, and were shouted at by their baby sisters, who sat in them, to go faster. Strapping youths and rosy-faced girls passed by with six-foot skis upon their shoulders, off to leap from the heights into the valleys. Winter for the first time was singing her song, and young Canada was listening to her with delight. Messrs. Ford and Cadillac had disappeared from the streets, while the horse, having come into his own again, dragged huge loads with perfect ease on the iron-shod runners of Canada's own carriage—the sleigh. The cry of the motor horn, which as a rule sounds like nothing so much as a sea-gull being served with a writ, was silent, and only the tinkling of a thousand little bells was to be heard. The orchestra of winter had struck up its first overture.

On looking back and thinking of St. John, it has always been to do so with very real pleasure. It

was quite unlike any other town we visited. As a matter of fact, there are no two places in the whole of Canada which resemble each other in the slightest degree. And this is what constitutes their great charm. Comparisons are as impossible about them as would be the comparing of a Château La Rose with 1911 Cliquot, or Napoleon brandy (if there is such a thing) with Waterloo port. One may have a preference, but there can be no comparison.

The city of St. John has a population of about forty-eight thousand and was founded by the United Empire Loyalists, who were driven in 1783 from what is now known as the United States of America, during the war of which the British Government of that time, under the rule of a none too brilliant George, made such a splendid muddle. At the foot of the principal thoroughfare, King Street, which is built on a hill and slopes gently down to the water-front, is a huge stone which commemorates the landing of these hardy loyalists, and of which their present-day descendants are justly proud.

There are many fine buildings and pretty parks here, especially the one in the suburb of Rockwood, from which we got a splendid view of the bay known to every schoolboy as the Bay of Fundy, for surely no geography paper was ever set in which the question, " Where is the largest rise and fall of the tide in the world ? " was not asked.

The St. John River, which is navigable for thirteen hundred miles, bears on its bosom annually 125 million feet of timber, which is subsequently turned into wood pulp or lumber. The city itself

is an important manufacturing centre, its factory products having a value of forty million dollars a year.

We gave three performances here (not because of this fact), changing the bill each evening, and played to the capacity of the theatre on each occasion.

The house is quite one of the finest in the Dominion, and, being practically new, is the last word in theatre construction of its class. The entertainments given at it as a rule are " pictures," but its stage is capable of accommodating any theatrical production, and the orchestra, with its fine organ, provided for us our incidental music and overtures in a way which were never played better, if as well, during our entire tour.

It was in St. John that I heard a really amusing story, which I think is well worth telling. The Bank of Montreal is to Canada what the Bank of England is to Great Britain, and is therefore something very real in the life of the community, a place which is loved by the man of wealth, feared by him of the overdrafted, and respected greatly by all. It appears that one morning a Frenchman and a Hebrew, who had been doing business together, left the office of the former and were making their way to lunch. As they passed a very imposing looking Roman Catholic church the Frenchman (as was quite right and proper that he should) took off his hat and crossed himself reverently. Immediately the Jew did the same. The Frenchman was extremely surprised at this, and turning to his friend, said : " My dear fellow, I didn't know you were a Catholic ! " " I'm not," said the Jew.

"Why do you ask that?" Well" said the Frenchman, "why did you take off your hat and cross yourself as you passed the church?" "Good heavens!" said the Jew, "I didn't know it was a church—I thought it was the Bank of Montreal."

Our time in St. John was limited, but we had an opportunity of meeting the most charming people; they could not do enough for us, and I shall certainly look forward on our next visit to meeting again the many delightful friends who were so extremely kind.

I may mention that it was here most of our ladies arrayed themselves in stockings and knickerbockers for the skating and ski-ing, and in their brightly coloured caps and jerseys they made their first attempts to become Canadians. Very pretty they looked, many of them cutting their hair shorter for fear, I suppose, of being taken for women.

We had not been long in the Dominion before we found it necessary, if we wished to be understood by the servants in the hotels, assistants in shops, messenger boys, telephone girls, and the like, to reconstruct our vocabulary.

We now no longer talked of a "shop." "Store" was the right word. For "lift" we said "elevator." For "motor car" we learned "automobile." For "quickly" or "at once" we said "right away." But why people say they will get a thing for you "right away" when you want it *here* I have never been able to fathom.

A telephone girl is called "the operator," evidently because she cuts you off, and to her the small courtesies of "Please" and "Thank you" seem quite unnecessary, always eliciting a surprised

"How's that?" if you say "Please," and a pleasant though equally surprised "You're welcome" if you say "Thank you" to her.

The usual method of telephoning I found was to pick up the receiver and call loudly "Give me——" whatever number you wanted, and a second or so afterwards you heard your young lady operator shout at you, "Your party." This was all very strange at first, especially in the early morning, as at home we usually give parties in the evening; but I soon mastered the telephone conditions and gave up wasting any Canadian operator's time by such apparently unnecessary and futile remarks as "Please" and "Thank you."

In the theatre if you wished to inform anyone that the person they were looking for was on the stage, you didn't say they were "on the stage"; you said they were "back stage." It's quite possible they might have been sitting on the very front of the stage, but nevertheless "back stage" is what was best understood and so we said "back stage."

If you had asked for a *tumbler*, a waiter would probably have told you that he wasn't an acrobat. "Glass" is the right word.

"Atta boy" was an expression none of us picked up for fear of it becoming a habit, as if used in England it might sound very like encouraging a timid youth to kiss some very unwilling young lady.

"How's that?" as an inquiry, is used in place of the English "What?" On hearing this for the first time I answered "Not out," thinking my questioner was a cricket fan appealing to an umpire, but cricket is not popular here.

A railway station is called a " depot."

" Melted butter " is " drawn butter."

A small apple tart is " *an individual apple pie*." At first this certainly made one a little frightened as to what part of the cook might be in it, but its meaning soon became quite clear. It meant a small pie entirely for yourself.

" Luggage " is " baggage."

A page boy is a " bell boy," though they don't carry a bell and never answer one if they can help it —unless they are given a " quarter " (one shilling in our money).

If you want a friend found for you in an hotel, he is what they call " paged," which means that his or her name is shouted through lounge, vestibule and all public rooms. I soon grew quite accustomed to having the name of Miss Guggenheim or Mrs. Rosenthal whispered in my face questioningly. Till this happened I never knew I looked like that.

The word " orwreet " is also much in use. I discovered it meant " all right," and in doing so it made conversation easier.

The advertisement I saw constantly of " frock-jackets for stouts " was extremely amusing and much to the point, almost to the *em-bon-point*, though it seemed to me it would take an extremely courageous lady to walk into a shop (I mean a store) and say she wanted a frock-jacket of the kind generally reserved for " stouts."

I remember on one occasion, when showing my ticket to a railway conductor and inquiring which was my car, being asked by him if I was " the theatricals." I felt I was being taken for an entire amateur

performance; I have never considered myself that, but, as I learned afterwards, the alternative would have been to have asked me if I belonged to "the show." I thought I was lucky to escape as a "theatrical," as there is no more objectionable thing than to hear the word "show" used at any time in connection with my profession. The word died, if not with Barnum, certainly with Bailey.

Then, too, to be told that someone had on a "swell suit" was a little disconcerting. It seemed to convey the impression that the person in question had had clothes made a size too large for him so that he could blow himself out to fit it, but when I realized that it only meant "elegant" or "extremely fashionable" I was again placed entirely at my ease.

In mentioning these little differences in language (and there are dozens of others), I hope it will not be thought for a moment that I do so in any carping spirit. On the contrary; why shouldn't a *lift* be called an elevator? After all, "How's that?" is quite as permissible as "What?" And why shouldn't "right away" be substituted for "at once"? Oh! no, I think many of these alternatives for Shakespeare's language are quite delightful. But, as they are all Americanisms, it is devoutly to be hoped that they will not increase and multiply, or in fifty years time the British traveller before buying his ticket will have to go through a Berlitz course.

Tennyson once said: "Why, sir, use the French word 'corridor,' when we have a very fine old English word 'passage'?" And that is precisely what I think. Why should the ordinary man in

the street borrow very bad American slang when he has as a heritage the pure and beautiful language his fathers have handed down to him through the centuries? Surely what was good enough for a Lamb or a Hazlitt is better than the Yankee captions of a cinema house. Canadian ladies and gentlemen speak perfect English, and if it is good enough for them to do so it would be a most delightfully British thing if the *hoi polloi* took them as an example. The American language is quite a beautiful language, no doubt, but it is not English, any more than Italian is French, and as language is the greatest link of Empire, surely there is nothing better than that ours should be kept intact. Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, may I humbly plead for this?

We left St. John at four in the afternoon and having reached our destination, after a night journey in our own reserved car, which was voted by the ladies "divine" and by the men "perfectly splendid," we were now in Montreal, the largest city in the province of Quebec.

Quebec! The Province of Romance and Tragedy! For looking up at the heights of its name city, had not Sir John Moore thought on Wordsworth and perhaps "the tolling of his own curfew, which was so soon to leave his world in darkness?"

And was it not from the Iroquois and Mohawk Indians that Fenimore Cooper had found his inspiration for the schoolboy lovers of scalp and tomahawk?

Here Jacques Cartier had landed with a bare handful of his followers after voyaging on the

uncharted waste of waters with Hope as his only guide, to plant a cross and set it up claiming this new country " in the name of France and Christ."

And was it not on the plateaus and the plains of this wonderland of beauty that two hundred years afterwards the English plucked the jewel from the crown in which Cartier had set it ?

It is through this province that the mighty St. Lawrence, searching for the sea, hurls herself from the head of the Great Lakes two thousand miles away, and looks haughtily, in moods uncounted, upon the face of Nature, and the handiwork of man, while along her greatest widths the Laurentians stand sentinel. To the tributaries of the river the Indians named so well " The River without an end," this province owes its power of hydro-electric energy, and these, although to-day of one million horse-power, are yet but barely tapped, and give but a tithe of what they are capable.

Added to this peaceful weapon of boundless possibilities which Providence has placed within her hand, Quebec ranks second only among the provinces as a manufacturing centre, realizing yearly from her immense forest resources in pulp and lumber a sum approximately of one hundred and thirty million dollars. Her field crops yield as tribute to her loveliness three hundred million dollars every season, to say nothing of her dairy industries, which represent fully forty million more. And all this on the credit side of a new country's balance sheet, a country capable of sheltering *two hundred* million people and which is now inhabited by barely *ten !* For her what more than hopes ! What prospects !

Even in a few short years, "You, Canada, what may you not become?—truly an Empire in yourself, and one a Cæsar would have looked upon with envious eyes."

Britain, she is still part of you. It would be well to think wisely and think well. Dreams have often a rude awakening.

Montreal! What a city is this, with its three hundred churches mothered by the twin towers of the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

Laid out haphazard as it was in the early days, its sometimes winding streets and unexpected squares make it the thing of beauty which it is. It is much less orthodox and far more wayward in its architecture than any other Canadian city, and there is a something over it all which makes one feel that the spirits of its founders still live to guard its roofs and gables. One moment it is the city of a laughing France that meets the eye, the next the austere planning of modernity, saying, "Seventeenth century you may be, but don't forget to bow your head to mass production."

On one hand is a palace for a Prince of Commerce, on another a hotel a King might live in. A widening way circles the precincts of a world-famed University, and with theatres here and laughter houses there, and shops on every side which offer in their windows all that London and New York admire, you have a modern city *in excelsis*, and one which first and above all else is alive! For she is peopled by sons and daughters of Ille-et-Vilaine and the Loire, of Mont St. Michel and of the little town where Cabot's statue stands gazing so eagerly out to sea.

France, who has taught all Europe how to love and live, sends to her children's children here an echo of her laughter.

The majority of the inhabitants of Montreal are purely French either by descent or by extraction, the British numbering, of her seven hundred thousand, not quite a third.

Her harbours and her piers of eight long miles are served by " The River which has no end " and bears her commerce to the sea three hundred leagues away.

First she elected to be christened Ville Marie, but long before Jumonville, bent on destroying the outposts English soldiers held, was called upon to halt by George Washington himself, then an officer in Britain's Colonial Forces, she like many another maiden, changed her name, choosing Montreal in honour of beautiful Mount Royal, which stands protecting her two miles distant from her river frontage. These were the times when Mount Royal's heights were sanctuary for deer and moose, days before Olmstead's pleasant highways beckoned the people to their playground at its summit.

It would be impossible to visit a city more likeable than this. It is a jolly place. This word is used because it really is so, and best describes its happy liveliness. Its townsfolk are gay, its restaurants are merry, and hospitality is everywhere. It is the cradle of Canadian generosity.

The loveliest houses are seen on every side, some of them palaces in miniature, places of infinite charm where comfort and luxury walk hand-in-hand.

Of our individual hosts, to whom we were indebted

for a thousand kindly actions, one may of course only speak in general. To mention them by name would be to commit, as W. S. Gilbert said in *Pinafore*, a solecism which society would never pardon. I wish it could be otherwise. Still, they all know what they meant to us, I'm sure, and that our farewells when parting came were anything but formal. It was our grateful hearts and not our lips alone which bade these dearest of people good-bye.

And what pretty girls are to be seen everywhere in Montreal, whether they be *midinettes* or those they are to serve. There is a *chic* about them all, a daintiness scarcely to be found anywhere outside the Paris boulevard or the Bois. I have travelled far and wide and have always admired beautiful women with infinite and unbounded pleasure, but never anywhere can I remember having seen so many pretty faces as Canada can show.

It was in this city that, as part of a crowd of fifteen thousand people, we saw our first match at Ice Hockey, the fastest played game conceivable. On this particular occasion we saw a struggle in which party feeling ran exceedingly high, one team being *British* and the other *French Canadians*. It was dazzling to watch, and the players so lightning-like in their movements, that it was with difficulty one could keep track of the tiny black object they were striking, which looked in the distance little bigger than a bronchial lozenge. The certainty of the men was such that one almost forgot they were skating, and in comparison the dangers of a rodeo seemed as very little. How many of them didn't dash themselves to bits against the sides of the arena,

as like a bullet from a rifle they flew by, I can't conceive. Both teams we saw were champions in this game, which brings out to the *n*th all the individual quickness of the Latin temperament.

We played at His Majesty's Theatre, Montreal, for a fortnight, giving *The Man in Dress Clothes* and *Sleeping Partners*, and met for the first time our very alert manager, Mr. Bert Lang, who in conjunction with Mr. O'Neill, Sir Martin Harvey's manager, had arranged our entire Canadian tour in the most comfortable way possible. Here, too, we became acquainted with Mr. Morgan Powell, a great and kindly critic, who, being an Imperialist first, last and all the time, did all he could to help us with his encouragement and advice, as he does all visitors from England.

During the first act of *The Man in Dress Clothes* on our opening night at Montreal the audience we found by no means easy; it struck me that they were waiting to see what we had to offer, but as the evening wore on we were conscious that we had not disappointed them, and when the final curtain fell the wonderful reception we received was something to remember.

From Montreal we went to Ottawa, and the snow which had welcomed us at St. John and followed us to Montreal lay like a vestal's robe over the capital. Indeed, from now on we found ourselves in a white Canada underfoot, a blue Canada overhead, and a sun above us for ever shining brightly. The city, though by no means as big as I had visualized it, is one of remarkable beauty.

The Houses of Parliament are surely not to be

Photo : Bertram Park.

ELLALINE TERRISS (MRS. SEYMOUR HICKS) TO-DAY

equalled by any modern building of their kind in the world. The dignity of their elevation is superb, and the site on which the seat of Canada's place of government has been set is perfect, standing as it does far back in its own grounds overlooking the magnificent Ottawa river.

One of the National Hotels, the Laurier, built as a vast château, is certainly for beauty and luxury the last word in hotel construction. Its exterior reminded me of one of the castles of the Rhine, and when I entered I thought I was back at Claridge's.

I had the honour of being given a luncheon at Ottawa on my arrival by the Canadian Women's Club. We sat down four hundred and twenty to lunch. It was a wonderful gathering, for not only were my hosts the first ladies of the city, but they had all been grand workers for the welfare of their men during the War, and the fervour with which they spoke of Britain was wonderful to listen to.

Throughout the Dominion the women of Canada are a great power, for they are not only helping the builders of their nation but work enthusiastically themselves for the land of which they are so justly proud. Poor Seymour was the only male at this luncheon and was pardonably nervous in replying to the many kind things which were said about us. In reporting the affair one of the newspaper correspondents said : " Mr. Hicks, to look at, is more like a British Admiral or a prosperous farmer, than an actor." We did not know whether this was meant as a compliment or not.

It was in Ottawa that we were presented to their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady

Willingdon, and it would be difficult adequately to express our gratitude to them for all they did to help us, not only in Ottawa itself but throughout our entire stay in the Dominion. To imply only that their Excellencies are liked, would be wrong, for they are loved by everyone from Halifax to Victoria, and if I may very respectfully say so, this is not alone because of their own immense personal charm but because every Canadian knows in his heart how dear to His Majesty's representatives Canada really is.

Kingston, where we next appeared for three performances, is a small town with many memories about it, and in its fort and barracks, which are of great historical interest, are stationed the Canadian gentlemen cadets who carry beneath their smart uniforms those marshals' batons which Napoleon made famous in a phrase.

Kingston is a big shipping centre, and it was a curious sensation to walk upon the frozen river among the ice-bound vessels which were making silent holiday waiting for Spring to give life to their engines once again.

From here we went straight to Toronto for a week. Toronto, which is the best theatrical centre in the country, is a great big modern city with the most beautiful shops and hotels, wide streets and splendid theatres, and a lakeside boulevard which embraces it for miles. The city is wonderful enough to-day—what it will be like in a very few years no prophet can tell.

Here, as in Montreal, we met with the most astounding reception and hospitality, and made

what I think and hope will be many lasting friendships.

In Toronto British thoroughness and American efficiency walk side by side. It has the eager bustle of New York, and the liveliness in its streets and the definite object in view of its people reminded me very much of Sydney. The King Edward Hotel, at which we stayed, is a wilderness of luxury, and in the course of erection is a colossal C.P.R. house which I am told will contain no fewer than a thousand bedrooms. Toronto, too, boasts the most splendid Club of its kind I should think in the world, the Granite Club. It serves the purpose of our own Bath Club in London, but is in every way far more magnificent.

We opened at the Royal Alexandra Theatre and played to packed houses at every performance.

It was here more than at any other city we visited that we heard on all sides the demand for British attractions. Rightly so, the people of this great metropolis feel that there can be no greater link of Empire than the continual arrival of British artists to show young Canada not only our modern plays, but also the English classics, which are, of course, as much their property as they are ours. Empire repertory companies would have an untold and lasting effect not only on the great untravelled public, but would be of immense benefit for all the schools. It seems to me a vast pity that so simple a scheme, which would only require a small subsidy from the Home Government, is not embarked upon. It would cost little and Imperially do an enormous amount of good, for at the present time the

entertainment which Canada is offered in the theatre is as a rule only that which second-class American attractions provide; or if in the cinema houses which abound everywhere, American films, from which their eagle screeches patriotically. So greatly do I feel that there is a crying need for British art in all its branches to be represented year in and year out in Canada that I would gladly devote a large portion of my time to helping such a scheme if it should ever come into being.

Government House, Toronto, is beautifully situated on its outskirts, and like all official institutions throughout the Dominion, quite the last word in dignity and design.

Of the surrounding country, which is delightful, we saw little, our eight performances and social functions taking up nearly all our time. I did manage, however, to creep away for two hours one afternoon to see my first baseball match, a most exciting game of skill, and while I was unable to follow its many intricate points of play, the huge crowd of fans who attended it were themselves a marvellous entertainment. Everyone seemed to be good-naturedly insulting those taking part in this national pastime, the Umpire, the Thrower, the Catcher, the Batsman and the fielders were all shouted at by their Christian names and generally informed by opposing fans why they shouldn't be there. It was all very novel and amusing, and the many witty things to be heard on all sides at the expense of the teams would have filled a comic newspaper.

At any great climax of the game pandemonium

reigned supreme, and nothing made me laugh more than when a most sedate old gentleman near me, who looked like a prosperous banker, rose quietly from his seat and taking a bugle out of his pocket very solemnly proceeded to trumpet his delight. I shall certainly take the very first opportunity of going to another ball game, for never can I remember two hours spent more profitably.

It was at a luncheon party given by a famous hostess in Toronto that I heard a story which amused me very much. It was that of a late comer to church who, arriving during the sermon, whispered to the verger: "How long has he been preaching?" "Oh! about thirty years," said the verger. "Oh! has he," replied the anxious worshipper, "then I'll wait—he is sure to finish soon."

Before leaving Toronto I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hector Charlesworth, the Editor of *Saturday Night*, one of the journals distinguished for its taste and culture the world over. A stern critic, he was extremely kind to us, and it was strange to hear him tell Seymour that as a young man he well remembered *him* as a young man visiting Toronto with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in the year 1890. This could only have been an odd freak of memory, for, as Seymour himself said afterwards, "Surely, I couldn't have been as bad an actor in those days as all that."

After leaving Toronto we visited three towns in one week. London for two nights, Brantford for one night, and Hamilton, where we gave a matinée and two evening performances.

London we found a delightful little place, and

more than interesting from the fact that everything about it breathes of our great capital. It has its Regent Street and Piccadilly and the familiar names of old Cockaigne are to be found everywhere. The theatre and hotel were both splendid and the audiences enthusiastic. There was a large Channel Island colony here, all of whom supported their brother Jerseyman, my partner, right royally.

Brantford, unfortunately, we had no opportunity of seeing, as we arrived in the late afternoon and left early the next morning, but I shall not easily forget the fact that at this hotel I was given the bedroom in which our late gracious Majesty King Edward slept when he visited the Dominion as Prince of Wales. This was an honour only allowed to distinguished visitors, so I felt very grand.

Before leaving Brantford, however, we did make a pilgrimage to the beautiful memorial set up by his fellow townsmen to Bell, the inventor of the telephone. It gave us a great thrill to know that this peaceful little place had given birth to one of the greatest inventions of modern times and one which was to be the father of so many others.

Hamilton, much bigger than the other two towns we had just left, is a real city in miniature. It is beautifully laid out. The Royal Connaught Hotel is a splendid one, and the theatre audience is grand. Within a few miles of the town is the most delightful country club imaginable, and Hamilton itself is certainly the busiest and most modern of all the smaller places in the Dominion. Its people are charming, but as this is the case where-

ever you go in Canada, it is quite unnecessary for me to keep on saying so.

We now made our first really big jump to Winnipeg. "The Gateway of the Prairies," as it is called. We were two days and two nights in the train and opened there on a Tuesday. What a journey this was. I think, looking back at it, that the beauty of the scenery as the train wound its way like a human thing along the edge of the Great Lakes was as awe-inspiring in its own way as the magnificence of the Rockies themselves. To attempt to describe either of these trips is beyond my powers, even if I had a mind to do so, for they have been written of many times by the world's greatest word-painters.

In Winnipeg we were for the first time hundreds of miles from the sea, and yet there was nothing in any shape or form that the most fastidious Parisian could desire and could not have obtained. Its theatres, its magnificent Government buildings, and its hotels are the very last word in extravagance and good taste, and its jewellery and fur stores and large emporiums of every kind are not to be excelled anywhere.

We had a marvellous week in Winnipeg theatrically and socially, and we were only so sorry that our stay was all too short.

From Winnipeg we set out for Calgary and Edmonton, visiting several smaller towns afterwards on our journey to Vancouver. These included Saskatoon, Medicine Hat, Moose Jaw, Lethbridge and Regina, playing sometimes one and sometimes three performances at each of them.

Moose Jaw we did not see as we only just arrived in time to play and left immediately after the performance. Medicine Hat is a quaint picturesque little place, while Regina, although it has only quite a limited population, possesses a new C.P.R. Hotel which cost a million sterling to build and is perfectly extraordinary. From its top windows the prairies which surround the town are to be seen stretching in unmeasured miles away and away to the horizon. In the summer they must be a picture of beauty with their golden ocean of waving corn.

These palatial hotels in small places show what the brains of the country realize is going to be its development in the very near future.

In Regina we found ourselves in one of the greatest centres of the Canadian granary, a place where the mention of fifty million bushels of wheat is spoken of quite casually, for you see the farming products of Canada in cereals represent in value nearly one thousand million dollars per annum. Such figures are staggering; such progress only to be associated with the waving of a magician's wand, and yet to-day Canada is still barely scratched either on the surface or beneath her earth, which is an Aladdin's cave stacked with treasure. The word "potentialities" is generally the stock phrase of a day-after-to-morrow country, an incomplete present creating an alibi future. But in using the word "potentialities" about Canada her present is really so wonderful that some other word to describe her future should at once be coined. Each and every province is an abundance hand at Bridge, overflowing as they do with everything that Provi-

dence has given all other countries put together. It is *the* land for youth and endeavour, and no real man who means to put his shoulder to the wheel can help making good in it. Be sure, however, that it is no place for the idler or weakling. Gold is not to be picked up, nor is wheat to be "wished into being," but with the will and the strength there is more than a living wage to be earned. There are chances at every turn for ultimate independence and many fortunes.

For Canada the British born are absolutely necessary, not only because she herself desires them, but even more so because it is vital for the prosperity of England to-day, and her safety to-morrow, that this millionaire daughter of hers should not marry out of the family circle.

Saskatoon, the heroine of a great land boom prior to the War, is a town of great possibilities, so we were told, while Lethbridge, an important and growing place, has an excellent theatre.

We played four performances at both Calgary and Edmonton. Calgary is certainly one of my favourite places of all those which we visited. It is modern and alive to a degree and its surroundings are wonderful, for the lovely foothills are close at hand and the mighty Rocky Mountains show themselves from here to the visitor for the first time.

It seemed almost unbelievable to think that so far from the hub of the world we were in a city which possessed everything one could possibly want. There was comfort, there was luxury, a really fine theatre, outskirts with beautiful residential avenues, a perfect country club, and a C.P.R. Hotel which

for magnificence puts ninety per cent of the hotels in Europe to shame.

Edmonton was tremendously interesting, for it was here first that we saw the picturesque men from the prairies in their ten-gallon hats, figures we had only before seen on the films, red-shirted, loose-trousered, bronzed and careless-looking as they lounged slowly on the sidewalks gazing into the shops which are filled with everything that a great city holds, from jewellery to hardware, and from French models to first editions, and, to cap all, here, in one of the most out of the way points of the Empire, was the Macdonald Hotel, belonging to the National Railway, which is only very little less better than its brother The Laurier at Ottawa.

I must not forget to mention that at none of the hotels in Canada did we ever fail to meet waiters from London who had been either at the Savoy or the Carlton, the Café Royal, Simpson's or elsewhere, and that with few exceptions they had all been home to fight for England during the Great War. This knowledge gave me many a thrill and by no means always a silent "thank you."

From here we went straight to Vancouver, a magnificent city, the New York of the West. To attempt to describe it would be like beginning to write a new book. All I shall say, therefore, in humble appreciation of this wonder place is that if my home were not in England I should think many times before choosing anywhere else in which to settle down. Not only is the city itself satisfying from every point of view, but the surroundings in which it is set are beyond compare. On her

western front is the Pacific, facing her is Grouse Mountain, 5,000 feet high, which overlooks the loveliest coast drive for miles and miles to Horse Shoe Bay, while at her back door is the Fraser River and the mountains of America pleasantly challenging the beauty of British Columbia. The two days' trip down the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Quebec and onwards is a panorama of all that is exquisite, but it must give place to the loveliness of Vancouver and its island-strewn journey to Victoria, B.C. Indeed I have never seen anything more entrancing in the world than this Pacific end of North America. And so, having arrived in Fairyland at last, I knew I had found my little way around the earth's circumference.

One of the greatest pleasures of my travels through Africa, Australia and Canada has been the fact that I have been able to give my now grown-up darling Betty an education in taking her with me, which only by work could I have afforded to do. With the exception of visiting the Far East together, which we still yet may do, she has shared all the joys of change and seen all the wonderful things I have seen, and by being my happy companion made them more beautiful still.

It is an uplifting joy to think that she and Seymour and I have laughed our way round the globe, and have found ourselves in the Spring-time of 1928 in the very garden of England, " Victoria." Our one week there seemed like five minutes, for nothing that could be done for us by those who are fortunate enough to call it their home was *not* done, and

indeed more. I am longing and longing to return to it, and them.

We journeyed from Victoria to the East, again playing on the way at all the principal cities we had previously visited, and arrived in Montreal in the middle of May for our farewell week, sailing after the Saturday night's performance for Home, and by the greatest good luck on the *Laurentic*, which the most lovable of commanders, Captain Trant, had humorously christened " Our Yacht."

We were not saying good-bye to Canada, only *au revoir*, for before leaving we made arrangements to return to the Dominion at the end of the following November, which, all being well, we shall do, bringing with us new plays with which to tour from Halifax to the Coast. This being so, I was very happy, for, if it had been otherwise I should have been absolutely miserable, for I love the Dominion and its people with all my heart.

After a splendid passage, it was of course wonderful to get back home again, and while my partner, after a well-earned holiday, went on a big Provincial Tour, Betty and I contented ourselves by taking six months' rest.

CHAPTER XVIII

"FAREWELL IS *NOT* EASILY SAID"

WE had not been in London very long when playgoing England was stirred to its depths by the news of Ellen Terry's death. Dear Auntie Nell was no more! I could hardly believe it, for although I had not seen much of her during her latter years, still her vital personality was an ever-present one, and the fact that I should never be with her again in this world was a deep sorrow which I shared with everyone in England who had known her and, having known, loved her.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about her end was the spontaneous and universal grief which it aroused, for it must not be forgotten that she was even passing her zenith when Henry Irving died in 1905, and that therefore none of the younger generation of playgoers knew her except as a great name. And yet, to show what a mighty hold she had upon a nation's affection, the death of no one in the world in literature and art to-day could have made a more profound impression than did hers.

The memorial service held for her at St. Paul's,

Covent Garden, was very simple and beautiful, happy and simple as she would have wished it to be. As I sat with closed eyes, listening to the joyousness of it all (a joyousness which her last instructions had insisted upon), I could see her lovely face all smiles of thankfulness and hear her clapping her hands in approval as she always did when she was pleased.

The wealth of flowers which turned the old Hogarthian church into a village place of worship might, in their orderly disorder, have been arranged by her. The happy music chosen by her own dear self in one of her gayest moods.

She wished no meaningless or grotesque forms of black to mar her journey, no stilted rhetoric or funeral dirge which, child as she was to the end, she so abhorred. Just a happy waving of the hand in *au revoir* was all she asked for, knowing that for those who love each other the word "good-bye" does not exist.

Merry her personality had made the world. She had too generous a nature to rob that world when her eventide came of what she had bestowed upon it. For this, her last great thought, we loved her even more.

I saw no tears around me, and not a single one did I myself shed for Auntie Nell, for something told me she was happy, and, this being so, why should I cry? What made me sad were thoughts, not of her, but of the days I'd lived in with her.

All in a moment the cruel hand of Time rolled back the curtain he had drawn across my life well over thirty years before, and on the instant I was

young again. My father looked upon me with his loving eyes. The old Lyceum came to life, and on its stage strode Henry Irving, bowing in crimson as Wolsey to his King, and the one we mourned for, pleading her case again. I saw Olivia and the Vicar, Hamlet and Ophelia, and through the years I heard the silvery voice which had moved a multitude to tears offer, as she only could offer, "Rosemary for remembrance." "The Bells" jangled in my ears. German's music tumbled its groups of dancers into the masque, King Lear bid Cordelia "think again," and in the tumult I could hear poor Tom, my father, cry "he was acold." The memory of him I loved so dearly made me for a moment disobey her last command, but I shed no tear for her. I was glad to find my way into the sunshine, and left this house of flowers, which was to hold for ever all that was earthly of Ellen Terry in its safe keeping, unable to speak either to Edie or to Teddy Craig, or Marion, or especially to that great actor and dearest of men, Fred Terry, for he and father had loved each other very much, and the gentle smile he gave me as they sang the hymns was one which, though Will Terriss would have thanked him for it, upset me more than I can say.

And now I bid my readers an affectionate farewell.

If in these pages they have found a few things which may have interested them, I am very glad. If by some chance I have unwittingly offended anyone, will they forgive me, for this I am sure,

on reflection, they will know was the last thing in my mind?

I have omitted to mention dozens and dozens of people to whom throughout my life I have been greatly beholden. Because I have not done so through lack of space, they will not, I trust, think I love them any the less dearly!

May I hope that this little chronicle of a simple life will be looked upon with a kindly eye by those who, writing with expert pens, could, if so inclined, tear it to tatters sentence by sentence. I beg them to treat each split infinitive therefore rather as a summer beverage than a literary misdemeanour.

To You my Public, to whom I owe everything in the world, all I can say is,

Thank you very very gratefully, and
God bless you always,

ELLALINE TERRISS.

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